Sports
Pacquiao faces Thai fighter in Tagaig today

Science
How to help UP health science grads stay in country

Super
Billy Crawford: Worst thing said about me is that I had no dreams

World / A12
Bush administration backs UN's beleaguered Annan

Tagalog ng Bagong Taon / A11
Buwis sa yosi at alak, dapat bang taasan?

**Bad news for RP nurses: No more shortcuts to US**

LOS ANGELES—This comes as bad news for Filipino nurses.

Beginning Jan. 1, US immigration officials will block a shortcut that has allowed thousands of foreign nurses, predominantly from the Philippines, to get fast-track H1-work permits, the State Department announced.

According to a State Department bulletin is-

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

**Why lefties have survived world of the righthanded**

Saturday, December 11, 2004 | 36 pages | vol. 20 | no. 3
website: www.inq7.net

# Water shortage looms

A HAND appears from beneath the ruins of the collapsed two-story Reposter building in Barangay Tigbuan in Real, Quezon, as miners and Army men continue on Friday to dig up and recover bodies and search for signs of life. Search and rescue operations will continue until all possible survivors are found, the military said. AFP

## Logs, mud close water tunnel to Angat Dam

By Norman Bordadora and Tina G. Santos

AFTER the rampage of four successive cyclones now comes the threat of a water shortage.

Its deadly run (the avalanche of logs and mud triggered by the recent storms and a typhoon that a 13.8-km tunnel that brings water to Angat Dam from Umiray River in General Nakar, Quezon, has been severely damaged, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System said yesterday.

"This could mean that farmers and other water distribution entities could run dry in Metro Manila and nearby provinces in the summer months starting in April or May next June, MWSS administrator Orlando Hondrade told the business.

To help ease the threat, Hondrade appealed to Metro Manila residents to conserve water.

"The tunnel is totally closed... It has been washed out because of the huge landslides," Hondrade said, adding that logs and boulders had rendered the tunnel useless.

The Umiray facility supplies 20 to 30 percent of Angat Dam's water reserves, Hondrade said. (For more info on the tunnel, see Page A10.)

Located in Bustos, Bulacan, the dam supplies the potable water needs of 97 percent of Metro Manila's estimated 10 to 12 million people.

Angat also serves the entire irrigation requirements of Bulacan province and parts of Pampanga, said Ramon Mikpala, executive director of the National Water Resources Board, which regulates the use and distribution of the country's water supply.

Mikpala and water officials would meet on Monday to evaluate the impact of the damage to the line and concrete and how it could be remedied.

Hondrade said there would be

## Miner's nightmare led to miracle rescue in Real

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Luzon News Bureau

REAL, Quezon—For two calamity-filled nights, the 49-year-old miner had a hard time sleeping.

Luis Balangot of the Philex Mining Corp. said a young girl calling for help had been "haunting" him in his sleep ever since he entered here at the seaside Barangay Tigbuan on Monday.

Along with some 40 other miners from three mining companies in Barangay Tigbuan, Balangot was sent to Tigbuan to try and locate possible survivors trapped under the rubble of the Reposter building, which had collapsed at the height of Tropical Depression "Winnie" at 8:30 a.m. Monday.

He said his vivid dreams centered real and kept wanting back to him—even in the day when he and his colleagues were drilling into the debris.

"The child kept on crying," Balangot said in Tagalog. "She crawled toward me, then clutched my leg."

And then, he said, the child suddenly turned into an elderly woman.

"I was really afraid," he said. "I couldn't move. I almost died in my sleep. Luckily, a fellow miner who was beside me woke me up. It was only then that I realized that it was all a bad dream."

But it was more than a night mare; it proved to be a portent of things to come.

On Thursday morning, Balangot was the first to hear the faint sobbing voice of a woman crying for help from under the rubble.

But when he told his colleagues, they refused to believe him. "Maybe they thought it was part of my nightmares. But I was sure it was not," he said.

Minutes later, Balangot and the other rescuers were pulling out 3-year-old Emily Mark Sor out of the

PRESIDENT ARROYO leads arrival honors at the Palace for Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

## 13.6M affected by 4 typhoons

By Veli Corderoy and Pia Zarrosa

IT MAY boggle some minds but the four cyclones that lashed Luzon in a span of 10 days affected a total of 3.87 million families—or 13.42 million people.

That's more than the population of Metro Manila, roughly estimated at 11 million, and about equal to the combined populations of Bataan and Singapore. It also far exceeds New York City's eight million inhabitants.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman gave the latest figure yesterday after assessing the damage caused by the cyclones "Unding," "Violeta," "Winnie" and "Yoyong."

The Department of Social Welfare and Development uses the term "affected" to refer to those who sustained injuries, or lost their homes, livelihood, or other valuables, whose houses, business establishments, farms were hit by floods, who were forced to miss work or classes, or who got stranded for days.

As a special treat for Christmas, more victims will be receiving—aside from usual relief bags—"brand new clothes" courtesy of the Bureau of Customs.

## Cuisia files ₱100-M suit vs wife's siblings

By Doris C. Dumlao

FORMER Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia Jr. has instructed his lawyers to file a ₱100-million damage suit as well as libel and perjury charges against three of his wife's siblings who had accused the couple of swindling his parents in the GTI scandal.

In a press briefing yesterday, Cuisia accused the siblings of his wife Ma. Victoria—Gwendolyn Jose Luis Jose and Cynthia Lopez—of conspiring to poison the minds of their sibling parents and convincing them that he and his wife had "stolen" their money.

"The objective of my action is to free and liberate in law is to get their hands on the funds which are managed by my wife and this is why they have emotionally and irrationally jumped into prematurely to draw cudgels against Vicky and me," he said.

Last Wednesday, Vicky's parents, Domingo and Emilia Jose, filed a complaint with the Justice

ACCUSED in a P134-M estafa case by his parents-in-law, former Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia Jr. and wife Vicky hold a press conference on Friday.

## New PM shares secrets of Singapore's success

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WHAT is the secret of Singapore's success and development?

Three points, according to visiting Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong: a "clean system" of government, good pay for civil servants and the certainty of punishment for corrupt officials and employees.

Lee, son of Singapore's elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew, is here on a two-day visit as part of his Asian tour after being sworn in as prime minister on Aug. 14. He also serves as Singapore's finance minister.

He was received by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who described Singapore as a "high-tech point" and the "most developed" in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Lee, 52, shared Singapore's ex-

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2004

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Most region, eastern section of Visayas and Mindanao and scattered mostly cloudy skies with scattered thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly to at times cloudy skies with isolated thunderstorms.

LUNAR PHASES

Second FRONTPAGE

# 'Most corrupt' label rocks PNP

## *Aglipay challenges 115,000 cops: Prove Transparency Int'l wrong*

By Christine V. Esguerra

IN THE BUSY rushed to investigate alleged widespread corruption and other irregularities at the Philippine National Police really up to the job?

In separate hearings early this week, top Senate General Edgar Aglipay asked congressmen to come up with a law to make the internal affairs service "completely independent" from the PNP.

Aglipay yesterday said the request was meant to enable the IAS to conduct a more effective investigation of irregularities within the police organization, including in "lifestyle check" of its top officials.

The IAS has apparently failed to one list especially among the PNP's top brass, considering that its findings were only "recommendatory" in nature. Meaning, it's still the PNP chief who decides whether to uphold or junk the IAS's recommendation.

For months it has been in the least for officials who ought have been performing hefty amounts from the PNP's budget. In fact it has yet to go beyond examining statements of assets and liabilities submitted by PNP generals and colonels.

In irony to that the IAS is staffed heavily by active PNP officers even if its head, the inspector general, is a civilian.

Even before the IAS could come up with its findings, Aglipay said he had already ordered the apprehension of civilian deputies in the PNP's office for corruption and bribery.

"You will note out that there will be more civilians assigned to critical (positions)," he said in a press conference. "There will be a lot of changes."

The decision was prompted by the controversial handling this year of the Philippine Air Force's (PAF) modernization program, which has been marred by allegations of corruption and bribery.

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## Masked gunman opens fire at rights rally; 1 dead, 4 hurt

LEGAZPI CITY—A masked gunman opened fire at an International Human Rights Day rally yesterday, killing a left-wing activist and wounding four people, including two children, police and organizers said.

The gunman fired randomly at about 500 people in Daraga, Catanduanes Norte, said Nancy Cabug, the coordinator for the human rights group Karapatan.

Silvestre Salcedo, of Barangay San Pedro, Daraga, the town, was pronounced dead on arrival at the Catanduanes Norte Provincial Hospital.

Antonio Beplan, an ex-parte from, was in the intensive care unit. Eduardo Bellanio, Angelo de Luna, 16, and a still unidentified 5-year-old girl were also wounded and undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

Salcedo, Beplan and Quimanio were members of the Kilusang Mambubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) Catanduanes Norte chapter, while de Luna and the unidentified girl attended the rally accompanied by their parents.

### Farmers protest

Some 1,200 protesters in Iloilo, Aklan, Capiz and Antique joined yesterday's protest action led by the December 10 Movement, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and the Defend Alliance Kampanyon. They assembled from three points before converging and holding a rally at the grounds of the now Iloilo provincial capitol.

Journalists in Antique held a 24-vehicle caravan in the capital town of San Jose to condemn the rash of killings of journalists and to demand justice for the victims.

But to be left behind, running priest Robert Reyes yesterday introduced the Supreme Court ruling "protest" Christmas songs greeting for the release of suspects in several celebrated cases, including the convicts in the killing of Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Reyes, members of Gawaran, and relatives of the suspects in the controversial murders of Aquino, Bluelle police boys Rhoeda Martinez, Col. Rolando Abadilla, and the Cheng sisters in Cebu, all sang protest carols in front of the high court yesterday morning.

Reyes urged the tribunal to consider the petitions of the 31 soldiers convicted for killing Aquino, saying that a new witness, SPO4 Rolito M. Castrobuhan, had surfaced to claim that it was Rolando Galman who shot the late senator in August 1983.

### Tension rises

At noon yesterday, the Northern Police District mobilized at least six buses and five jeepneys full of protesters and rally streamers at the North Luzon Expressway heading for Metro Manila to join the simultaneous mass actions.

Some 14 members of the Alliance of Progressive Labor were dispersed by policemen at the Chino Roces Bridge in Manila. APL's Jose Ignacio said he and other members suffered bruises in the scuffle.

"It's human rights day but our right to assembly peacefully was violated," Ignacio said.

Lalac, however, the police allowed 1,500 members of the Kilusang Bayo One, Lakas-ng-Anakpawis, Bayan and Bayan Muna to march on the Chino Roces Bridge.

Bayan spokesperson Renato Reyes said the human rights situation in the Philippines might rise in a state of calamity because of rampant violations.

### Heart-breaker

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo and President Macapagal-Arroyo "broke the hearts" of the families and relatives of 30 political prisoners when she failed to release them in time for this year's commemoration of the International Human Rights Day.

The prisoners included the 10 who were already recommended for release as early as 2001 by the justice department as well as those who were ailing and elderly. They were were among the 225 political prisoners existing under the Arroyo administration. *With Jobb Jaleo, Phil Stewart's Jayson Antonio, Nestor F. Burgos Jr., Bill Hagos-Bureau, Philip C. Salaya, Eduard C. Tandoy Jr., Lelia B. Salamero, Cynthia B. Balana, Vincent Cabreza and Maurice Malanes, All Northern Luzon Bureau and AP*

METRO
Lira Ester G. Dipasupil
Assistant Editor Connie B. Bikoy

# Las Piñas house yields fake drugs

By Nancy C. Carvajal

RIGHT before/after taking medicine?

Maybe it's time to pay your doctor another visit. Or, you could have been one of those who bought fake medicines that have found their way in some metro drugstores.

Half a million worth of fake medicines were seized from two Pakistani nationals during a raid in a house in Las Piñas, Thursday evening.

"I feel sad for those who were able to buy these fake drugs, thinking they they would get better," said National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Avelino Razon.

Assorted fake drugs were found inside the house of Waleed Mohammad Arif, 37, and Shafat Rehman, 31, at B-A23 Tangier St., Tropical Deluxe 09 Homes, Las Piñas City.

Another suspect allegedly involved in the illegal trade, identified as Elizabeth Bautista, was not arrested when the raid took place.

The suspects would be charged for violation of Republic Act 8203 or the Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs.

Supt. Danilo Pelletes, head of the NCRPO Intelligence Special Operations Office, said the discovery of the fake merchandise was the result of a sustained surveillance operation.

The raid was covered by a search warrant issued by Judge Elizabeth Yu Gorup of the Las Piñas Regional Trial Court.

Last month, the Department of Health announced the creation of government agencies and private sector groups to combat and eliminate the selling of fake medicines.

The coalition against fake medicines brings together efforts to curb the illegal trade by the Health, Trade and Justice departments, the Philippine Medical Association, the Drugstores Association of the Philippines, Mercury Drug Corp., Zuellig Pharma Corp., Pfizer, GMA-7 Broadcast Network and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Previous reports revealed that at least 30 percent of the medicines bought in pharmacies are counterfeit today, even found to be fake.

The DOH also warned the public to be vigilant when buying medicines, adding that it was important for consumers to carefully examine the packaging before they make a purchase.

If the prices on the labels are blurred or hazy, and the containers look like they had been tampered with or had been recycled, chances are the products are fake, the health department added.

# Extra 'angels' for 'Simbang Gabi'

By Leila B. Salaverria

PEOPLE attending the traditional dawn Masses or "Simbang Gabi" this month would be getting extra protection not only from their guardian angels.

Starting Dec. 15, the Western Police District would be deploying policemen around the city's churches to mingle with the crowd and watch out for snatchers and robbers who might take advantage of the situation, said WPD deputy for administration Sr. Supt. Juanito de Guzman.

"The night shift policemen at the community precincts would be deployed outside, not inside, the churches," he said.

According to De Guzman, the usual threats to churchgoers are snatchers and pickpockets, who would take advantage of the crowded circumstances to be able to ply their trade without being noticed.

Another danger is early morning or evening Mass participants are robbers who look in dark alleys or secluded streets waiting for potential victims, police said.

Manila is home to several big and well-known churches. The list includes the Quiapo church, the Manila Cathedral, the San Agustin church and the San Sebastian church.

The five police districts in Manila were earlier directed to map out a security plan to ensure the public's safety during the traditional dawn Masses.

Meanwhile, De Guzman said that evening Misses would also be held at the WPD headquarters along United Nations Avenue in Manila.

# 3 QC teachers cited for outstanding service

By Tina G. Santos

THE QUEZON City government has commended three teachers from the city who were among the winners in this year's Search for Outstanding Teachers, spearheaded by the Metrobank Foundation.

Belmonte led city officials in honoring the awardees, former G. Moreno, of Fort Bonifacio High School in Makati and a resident of Batasan Hills; Dr. Antonio Miguel Dans, who teaches at the University of the Philippines in Manila and a resident of New Manila; and Dr. Manuel Fy Jr., a professor from the Ateneo de Manila University.

"The city salutes you for serving as models of excellence, dedication and commitment in the teaching profession. What you have achieved will continue to serve as an inspiration to the teachers of our nation," Belmonte told the awardees.

The search, established in 1985 at the tail end of the Marcos years, seeks to find teachers are given their due to annual ceremonies. Since 1985, the foundation has recognized 236 outstanding teachers. This year, there were nearly 200 nominees.

The winners were chosen for their outstanding contributions to the teaching profession, personal integrity and character, mastery and competence, and promotional and community involvement.

One of the awardees, Dans, was a pioneer of evidence-based medicine (EBM) in the country in the mid-'90s, introducing it to the medical curriculum.

As a professor, Dans said he tries to uphold the three pillars of the academe, for which his school is known: research, service and teaching.

"Teaching is a wonderful learning experience," he said. "By becoming a teacher, you make a commitment to become a student all your life. In a way, you are able to stay young for as long as you can," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo conferred the gold medallions to the awardees recently.

The awardees received a trophy and a cash prize of P500,000.

MEGALOTTO 6/45
3 7 15 16 33 36

EZ2 2 31
SUERTRES 6 6 9
FOUR DIGIT 0 1 1 3

# Kin deny Chavit secretary went to Erap camp

By Armand Nocum

RELATIVES of Marilyn Reyes, the slain secretary of Basco Sec. Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, yesterday denied reports that she was recently in favor of ousted President Joseph Estrada before she was shot dead on Wednesday by a still unidentified gunman.

Interviewed by Inquirer.net reporters, a relative of Reyes, Singson's secretary of 15 years, said Reyes did not tell them anything, nor did she show any sign that she was having trouble with the Singsons.

"There was nothing in her disposition to show that she was troubled by something," said a relative who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear for her life.

The developed as Estrada's lead counsel Steve Espaldon yesterday informed the anti-graft court that Gov. Alfredo Lim would not be able to testify for the defense on Monday, then they were withdrawing Estrada's request to appear as a witness during the hearing.

Friends on the island the Sandiganbayan that is to be allowed to hear Lim's testimony on Dec. 13.

According to Reyes's relative, if the supposed "bodies" the had sent to the Estrada camp were true, then she would have confided all to her close friends, or she would have been more likely to leave Basco for good.

Former Magnolia exec Rep. Dakila Carlos Cabrido's spokesman, had claimed that Reyes wanted to leave the Singsons and to testify in favor of Estrada.

But another relative of Reyes dismissed the claim and asked Estrada and Dilangalen to stop spreading the alleged "rumors" of Reyes wanting to testify for the defense.

"We appeal to them to stop maligning the name of our beloved Marilyn with such unfounded rumors," said an elderly relative who also asked not to be named.

"These malicious insinuations of her wanting to testify against her boss are very unfair. Marilyn is no longer here to answer these charges. Let's leave her in peace," she said.

Reyes, who was set to testify as a "rebuttal witness," is known to have provided prosecution lawyers with information to demolish the testimony of defense witnesses. She was shot dead while leaving Singson's building in Barangka early this week.

Singson earlier said that was the reason she was murdered.

But Dilangalen raised just on their claim, saying that only Singson had the motive and the "homicidal impulse." He also said there were strings that pointed to Estrada's would-be backers in the supposed testimony of Reyes in favor of Singson.

# NBI ordered to probe killing of peasant leader

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to probe allegations that it was a soldier who shot and killed Sultan Kudarat leader Marcelino "Manang" Belmes, who was set to testify in a congressional inquiry into the violent dispersal of a rally at Hacienda Luisita last month.

A son of Belmes said his father had made a deathbed declaration that it was a soldier who shot him in front of the family home in Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac, last Wednesday.

"I have already ordered the NBI to look into the killing. We have to be careful in identifying the perpetrators. It would be unfair to immediately blame the military since rebels have put on police or military uniforms when they commit a crime," Gonzalez said.

Mark Belmes, 18, said his father had told his attacker as soon as a military uniform. Mark was in the tricycle that took Belmes to the hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said Belmes's reported dying declaration that a soldier had shot him would have to be studied as not all dying declarations should be taken at face value.

"We have to consider the source of the information. Dying declarations are stronger when they are made to a third party, like a doctor, bystander or barangay official who helped the dying man," Diaz said.

Gonzalez said the NBI would deploy its finest agents into the Belmes killing as it has already been designated the lead agency in the inquiry into the violent Nov. 16 dispersal of striking workers at Hacienda Luisita that left seven people dead and injured more than 100 others.

Gonzalez said the NBI was trying to verify several reports, including an allegation that three communist New People's Army commanders were killed during the dispersal.

He said the NBI was also still investigating whether the police violated the rules of engagement. Philip C. Salaverria and Lydia B. Balmaceda

# Refresher course for tutors

By Terra V. Quismundo

A REFRESHER course in English for those teaching the language.

Hundreds of Manila's public school teachers would become students of the English language anew, as the local school division has scheduled an English proficiency training program as part of the city's implementation of the English-only policy in its schools.

Noting the need for an English refresher course among public school teachers, Isabelita Sonico, assistant superintendent of Manila's Division of City Schools (DCS), said teachers have grammar problems in both spoken and written English, something that school officials would not want the teachers to pass on to students.

That, after Manila Mayor Lito Atienza announced in June his planned city-wide implementation of English proficiency programs for students and teachers, the DCS, upon its own initiative, drafted a teacher training program.

Called the Intensive English Proficiency Training for Teachers, the program aims to "refresh teachers' knowledge of the contents and mechanics of English as a medium of instruction and facilitate language acquisition through factual and functional use," among other objectives, as stated in a DCS paper explaining the program.

### Mistakes aplenty

For the first phase, some 900 English elementary and high school teachers were put through an English diagnostic test that focused on grammar.

Even while the DCS had yet to finish checking the answers, Sonico already has an idea how the results would be like.

"We have many mistakes in the first few papers we checked," she said.

"There was even one essay that made us all laugh out loud because of the errors," Sonico added.

Based on the results of the diagnostic test, teachers would be assigned to English refresher courses that would target their specific weaknesses, Sonico said.

Classes begin next week, and the English teachers would be required to attend twice-a-week sessions to be handled by English supervisors.

# Number code scheme backed

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MOST ALL bus operators are against the number-coding scheme.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority last received requests from legitimate bus operators to restore the number coding scheme on Edsa months after it was lifted.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said the bus operators complained that their earnings dwindled since the scheme was suspended last March.

"More buses on Edsa means more competitors," Vergel de Dios said in an interview.

"The operators said they lose a significant part of their daily earnings to additional buses," he added.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the immediate resumption of public buses from the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program or UVVRP.

The move was seen as an effort to keep bus companies from joining the claims for a fare hike before the elections.

### No increase, if...

Bus operators had stated that they would not press for a P7.50 fare increase if the MMDA would lift the UVVRP that has limited the utilization of their fleet.

The operators of some 2,000 buses had blamed the ending scheme for their reduced income.

The scheme had cut the number of public buses on Edsa by 20 percent.

"But those operators soon found out that the number of passengers in the main thoroughfare remains constant despite the additional number of buses on the road," Vergel de Dios said.

### Modification

The traffic chief said the bus operators, however, are asking for a few modifications in the scheme.

Vergel de Dios said the operators requested that the original scheme accommodate provincial buses of their owner and well-maintained buses keeping the road.

Instead of having the scheme on the last number of their plates, the bus operators asked the agency to issue special UVVRP cards so they could choose which buses to keep on their garages.

"They said the original scheme would not be carried down with their suggestions because it would still prevent 20 percent of their units from plying Edsa," Vergel de Dios said.

But MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the proposed modifications would cause problems for the agency.

"Those special cards could easily be faked by some spurious operators," Fernando said.

"The old system has been proven to work for everyone," he stressed.

JUST A HINT AHEAD. Christmas is just around the corner at Manila's Baywalk, spruced up with Yuletide decor set here on visitors on a holiday stroll. EDD ACUNA

# Why actor William Martinez got off the hook

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ACTOR William Martinez has been acquitted of the charge of illegal possession of drug paraphernalia by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Lack of evidence, according to the court.

"The court finds the prosecution's evidence, on the purported items allegedly seized from Martinez illegally search, unreliable and unconvincing as the prosecution failed to identify that the glass tube presented in court was the same improvised tooter allegedly confiscated from the accused."

As above, the glass tube used in sniffing shabu that was allegedly in Martinez' car was the one presented in court.

The prosecution and the police were probably paid off to screw up the evidence so that the case against the actor would become weak.

That probably happened in the case of Martinez.

It was highly unlikely that the glass tube used in the actor had disappeared such that the prosecution had to come up with another tooter as evidence.

Bribing is impossible in this country when money moves.

---

**Had they listened to their late, Orlando Mercado, there would have been no repeat of the 9/11 tragedy in 1991 when Bondsmen rampaged through the city streets** ing 4,000 people.

Mayor Rudy Jr. 1,000 people died from landslides and floods in Quezon, Aurora and other places. Hundreds left by the tolls of typhoon and depression.

Mercado was calling for a total log ban, without exception.

But his colleagues in the Senate and in the House of Representatives would have nothing of Mercado's proposal. Some of them were in the logging business or they were friends of legal and illegal loggers.

I asked Mercado about his reactions. The gentleman fear that is, he wouldn't want to say "I told them so."

Jil Mercado could say was that "some politicians slept in bed with illegal loggers."

When Mercado was secretary of natural resources, he terrified me to ride with him on a helicopter to Quezon where soldiers had seized illegal logs. He wanted to show me the extent of illegal logging in the area. I couldn't go with him because I was busy at the time.

Anyway, after he left, the confiscated logs were given back to their owners by corrupt officials at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

I once talked to a Marine assigned in Quezon at about that time. He told he and his comrades seized illegal logs. They risked their lives on the line when they did that because New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas were protecting the illegal loggers.

"Destroying our saving papol, sir," he said.

They should have shot those corrupt DENR officials.

# Bantayog honors heroes

VETERANS journalist Jose Burgos Jr., two writers, a bishop, a lawyer and two students lead a will be honored as martyrs and heroes of the anniversary ceremony on Dec. 16 at the Bantayog ng Mga Bayani Foundation in time to be held today at the Wall of Remembrance, Quezon Avenue corner EDSA in Quezon City. Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca will grace the event as guest of honor and speaker.

The others to be cited for their bravery and integrity are student leaders Leandro "Leni" Alejandro, Antonio Jun S. Celestial Jr., writer Sheila Caroline "Sol" S. Aluba, Bishop Luciano Mercado and labor lawyer Augusto "Bobbit" Sanchez.

Burgos, who died in Nov. 16, 2002, was the fearless founder-editor of the Mr. Bruno and Malaya newspapers, and is credited for being one of the pillars of the alternative or "mosquito" press in the dark days of the dictatorship.

Alethe Burgos, Joe's widow, remembers her husband's funeral as "an outpouring of love, admiration and support for Joe from across the land."

She also praised the people who will share honors with him as "the brave men and women who have conceded the legacy of courage with physical resolve and conviction, as well with selflessness and patriotism."

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# Ex-Phivolcs chief: Don't blame illegal logging for killer slides

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF MALOLOS—What triggered the killer landslides and floods in Aurora and Quezon was the many trees accumulated on the top of the mountains and that the peaks faded in summit, according to geologist Raymundo Punongbayan.

"Illegal logging was not the main culprit," Punongbayan told the lawmen on Thursday shortly after conducting an aerial inspection of Quezon, the said peaks of the storm Mindo mountain range in that province showed deep erosion, indicating the large volumes of water that swept it in the last two weeks.

He added: "There was a rule of trees—big ones, small ones, definitely not the size that logger are after. [The logger, were] not responsible for the situation.

Punongbayan also said most of the trees had intact root systems, indicating that it is from loose, unsaturated soil.

Because of the high elevation of the mountains and their steep slopes, the tendency was for the soil and everything on it to go down. "That's the law of nature," he said.

Punongbayan was the chief Philippine volcanologist when Mt. Pinatubo in Central Luzon erupted in June 1991.

He team from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology made aerosol predictions of the Pinatubo eruption—the worst worldwide during the 20th century.

Punongbayan said the recent landslides and floods were worse than the lahar two came small, rocks, ash and sand that were swept by the rains to the lowlands and that buried villages in Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales from 1991 to 1997.

"[Landslides and flash floods] are routines They come when least expected," he said.

The lahar flows were bigger in magnitude, but the landslides and floods were no less lethal to the rural folk, he said.

Saying that forested areas did not guarantee safety, Punongbayan urged those living on the foothills to be alert for clues on impending landslides and floods.

"A sudden reduction of stream flow and when the rivers dry up" are signs of damming, or when large volumes of water are trapped on mountain peaks. "When the peaks can no longer contain the amount of water, overtopping or bursting results, causing landslides and flash floods, he said.

Punongbayan said the government should install rain gauges on mountains and warn people to read the amount of rainfall.

No rain gauge has been installed in Aurora and Quezon, he said.

## Food truck hijacked

CITY OF MALOLOS—A truck loaded with relief goods intended for typhoon victims in Dingalan, Aurora, was hijacked last week in Nueva Ecija, discouraging rescue donors to invite more relief missions in that town, Bulacan Gov. Josefina dela Cruz said.

Dr. la Cruz said some members of the Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry asked her whether they could bring their relief goods.

"Nobody has to bring it to Dingalan because disaster victims in Bulacan have been getting enough. They would even want to become one of their trucks was hijacked while on its way to Dingalan," he la Cruz said in Thursday's meeting of the Regional Development Council.

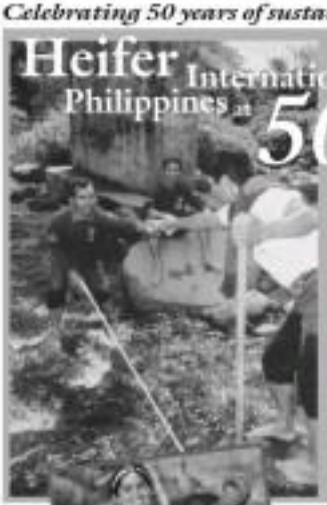
To avoid a similar incident, Central Luzon police director Benjamin Golang asked relief organizations to coordinate with the regional police in Camp Olivas, Pampanga.

Closing the same meeting, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap appealed to Central Luzon officials to provide counterpart funds for the rehabilitation of agricultural areas devastated by the successive typhoons.

"The DA could not do this alone so we need counterpart funds from the affected local governments and from your representatives in the rehabilitation efforts," Yap said.

Bulacan alone had more than P363 million worth of vegetables, rice, livestock and fisheries. Estrella Dejas and Gertrude Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

## Celebrating 50 years of sustainable success!




### Heifer Works Around The World

Heifer International works with communities to fight hunger and poverty and care for the earth. Since 1944 it has helped more than 7 million families in more than 50 nations people directly or indirectly in more than 115 countries around the world.

Heifer International believes gifts of livestock, training and planting on the gift itself, not necessary animals. Instead, heifers receive training, livestock breeding, environmental care and other skills that will help them become self-reliant.

Heifer envisions a world of communities living in harmony with the earth and sharing the resources of a healthy planet. Fundamental to its approach is sustainable development or "helping people help themselves." Working in the gift, heifers extend families who received an animal "seeds" for hope by passing on one of their offspring to other needy families. It uses gifts on the gift to other families. Thus, creating animals of hope, sharing livestock, knowledge, resources and skills. Heifer International's 10 guiding principles of development people, calling for the communities and volunteers to help themselves.

Heifer serve hope for a world without hunger through SEED: Sustain, Educate, Empower and Develop.

To help build sustainable livelihoods and food systems. Heifer works with fully capable communities of men and women, boys and girls to share in the gifts of the earth sustainably and to use support from Heifer to help improve food security.

To equip families to make informed choices and take actions to reduce poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. Heifer helps communities to identify their resources, to focus and gift training. Here learn ways, animal husbandry skills, and techniques on gender issues relevant to their lives and livelihoods.

Heifer will continue to be a catalyst and organization to be more effective, relevant, and also flexible.

A Unique Approach to Ending Hunger and Poverty

Heifer's work throughout the world is guided by a set of principles collectively called Passport to Dignity and Sustainable Development:

- Planting for the Gift
- Accountability
- Sharing and Caring
- Sustainability and Self-reliance
- Improved Animal Management
- Involvement and Benefit
- Genuine Need and Desire

- Gender and Family Focus
- Improving the Environment
- Land Stewardship
- Training and Education
- Spirituality

Heifer International Philippines is working with community organizations and local governments units to help meet families' basic necessities that are poverty, suffering and problems.

Heifer began its work in the Philippines in 1954 when the team carrying animals to war-torn Korea stopped in Manila to replenish its supplies. Instead of buying Philippine monkeys it sent back to the United States for sale to zoos.

The goats were given as food. VISCA, which followed Heifer to the Philippines in 1954. The program was later abandoned by the United Church of Christ and United Methodist missionaries who worked together through the Philippine United Life Center.

The program ceased in 1981 due to economic political conditions as well as the outstanding debt of the group to the government of the CEC movement contributing the program.

In February 1986, a Heifer employee was asked to the Philippines to explore the possibility of reopening the program and by September of the same year the Philippine program was officially opened through the Philippine Heifer Life Center.

In June with Heifer's extended presence, Heifer Philippines aims to reach, assisting and helping disadvantaged families to become self-reliant and sustainable, to improve the living conditions and of the same time take care of their environment.

Passing the 50th this country of passing on the gift of animals to help more than 50 project communities to other needy families, is an integral part of the Philippine programs.

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## A brighter future for hardworking Nestor and his family

Because parents has taken off from a good education. 40-year-old Nestor Fuentes relied on hard work to get through his life. He was raised by his Tinguian grandparents, Balakbak since he was in seventh grade. Balakbak shared by parents with Amelia Rosa.

When they were just starting, the Fuentes had only a small piece of land to farm. Nestor works simply as a farm hand. Knowing he Nestor looked to ways to augment his family's income by learning various crafts and eventually worked as a plumber and carpenter in the community. Sometimes, he has extra income from these activities, but his main source of livelihood is their backyard to help sustain their growing family.

In 1998, Nestor became one of the founding members of the Farm Forest Association (FFA) and attended seminars organized by Heifer International Philippines (HIP). Nestor and his family received livestock dispersal in Balakbak implemented by Heifer International Philippines (HIP). Nestor and his family received a total of four (4) Mahal sow, agricultural system. Together with several other farmers of Lapugan, he learned about sustainable farming practices. He also learned about the importance of reforestation as well as planting Trees, later formed Agro-Forestry Association (AFA). Kalikasan, which serves as office of the AFA, pioneer members of 60 Philippines of members.

His experience as a farmer other and his knowledge of sustainable farming practices made him a natural choice to become one of the project

[illegible] Nestor was given

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# It will be fighter versus fighter

## *Pacquiao faces Fahsan tonight*

By Recah Trinidad

A LOSS by Manny Pacquiao tonight could be as devastating as a disaster.

But don't worry, said Lucky de Jesus, Pacquiao's cut man from Puerto Rico, who said he also came for a money mission and could clinch up the Thai fighter as the other corner of the ring tonight.

PACQUIAO

FAHSAH

Pacquiao, 25, makes his 8-fing Mexican featherweight title against Fahsan 3K Baltazy of Thailand in today's Pera ng Taguig.

Fahsan, 30, had originally planned to run in the first four rounds to reduce exhaustion before moving at his favorite.

But anymore, said the Thai fighter who confirmed yesterday he would hang it up with Pacquiao right in the first bell.

"There's no hope in running, we lose if we do that. It's not Fahsan's style, he's not a boxer but a pure fighter, he stands up and slugs it out," said Jimmy Chanbonkong, Fahsan's manager.

As it will be fighter against fighter, said the Thai manager, because Pacquiao's style is similar to Fahsan's.

Perdesi, said De Jesus who has been working the Philippine corner since Pacquiao's rise to world stardom three years ago. (*See Tale of the Tapes on A16*)

### Walking into a wall

"If he (Fahsan) comes out to fight, he would walk into a wall," De Jesus predicted. "I may have to save him up."

The Puerto Rican, who first worked with Pacquiao when the MP hero stopped Lehlo Ledwaba for the world super bantamweight crown in Las Vegas three years ago, was present to yesterday's chronic weigh-in at the SM Coffee Shop at The Fort inside the Global City in Taguig.

Fahsan, visibly smaller, weighed 124 pounds.

Pacquiao breezed past the scales at 125 pounds, then flexed to flaunt bristling, muscle-like contours in the belly section.

It was the same weight he had when he met Juan Manuel Marquez and Pacquiao was quick to claim he felt so strong as he did in Las Vegas last May.

Again, Pacquiao refused to make any predictions, saying he would just do his very best and dedicate the fight to his countrymen, mainly the poor victims of the calamities (mudslides in Quezon province).

### Appetite for knockout

But try as he did, he failed to conceal his budding appetite for a knockout.

"Huwag kang magulat kung maagang matapos (Don't be surprised if I floored him with a right)," the sensational southpaw from Gen San told the Inquirer before boarding his red Hyundai Sonata.

Unlike Pacquiao, 39-2-2, (30 KOs), who refused to brag about a knockout win, Fahsan, 44-11, dismissed the fight pressure Thursday when he announced he would create a sensation by stopping Pacquiao.

Fahsan also claimed he knows of a hidden Pacquiao weakness which he would exploit inside the drop-dazzling ni 9.

The seasoned warrior will be no stiffer in the 12-round title battle of southpaws, meaning there will be no three-knockdown rule and no fighter could be saved by the bell.

Assigned to referee the fight is Switzerland Sid Nella. Princess Brave McTavish and Jaime Romero Epi Almeda and Ricardo Cardenas are the ring judges.

Top SF super flyweight '2' Gamen will fight Fahsan's stablemate while SF lightweight king Petmanee Bhordilla defends his crown in the undercard.

# New PM shares secrets of Singapore's success

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ers upon his Arroyo's prodding during their joint press conference yesterday in Malacañang. He had invited him to talk about his tiny city-state's "best practices" in fighting corruption, which he first discussed during the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Chile.

### Keeping system clean

"I think the most important thing we have in Singapore was we inherited a clean system, one which the British colonial government administered, and when the People's Action Party took over in 1959, we kept it clean," Lee said.

He said it was "a lot easier" to keep a clean system than to clean up a system that had "gone wrong."

"Secondly, we established a mechanism to make sure that if anybody was corrupt, they would be found out, investigated and punished," he said.

### Starting at the top

According to Lee, the head of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau reports directly to the prime minister and can investigate any official, including ministers.

He said it was important that corrupt people, especially officials, were punished: "There's no other way to do that. It has to start at the very top.

"If people see that ministers are making decisions and having some benefits along the way, then you can't do it so evenly. Your subordinates, your servants must know and say 'Well, if the boss is doing that, I can also get something for myself, too.' And the whole system will go wrong.

"So you have to start clean, keep it clean. It's sometimes painful but that's the only way to do it."

Thirdly, Singapore finds "stress" in ensuring that officials and members of the bureaucracy are well paid.

"If we don't pay [someone] proper wages, even at the working level, he can't survive living for himself and for his family," Lee said, adding:

"It's not possible to find someone[. Y]ou must not take a little percentage so as to stamp a passport or approve an application or to direct a contract one way or the other. He has to live.

"So we make sure that we're paying our civil servants competitively. He requires them to perform, live our philosophy is, Whatever [we pay] is meant to well reward the performance we get from them."

### Also her dream

Ms Arroyo could only express envy for Singapore's not-so-noted lechuza.

"With regard to the high pay of public servants, that is one big dream. But it's difficult to do that right now given our budget deficit. That's why we need to do fiscal reform so that we can afford a better paid bureaucracy," she said.

The President said the government's re-engineering plan—which includes attractive retirement pay for redundant employees—was being implemented to save savings partly for the pay increase of a "leaner and meaner" bureaucracy.

She said her administration was bent on fighting corruption, which she acknowledged as a major hindrance to economic development and prosperity.

She also said Singapore's close system "might be enough to make us feel very desperate" for a new form of government, but that she would not want for a parliamentary system to be in place before taking action.

### Hong Kong model

The President said she had been trying to put in place an anti-corruption mechanism similar to Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

She said Hong Kong graduated from being a "corrupt system" 30 years ago to being perceived as incorruptible five years after Lee began the good work.

"I'm trying to learn from the Hong Kong experience," she said, adding that a workshop organized by Luc Isender Tony Kwok would be held next week for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet members.

She also said she had ordered a revival of a one-stop investment processing shop to address concerns of Singaporean and even Filipino businessmen about bureaucratic red tape "and the corruption that goes with it."

### Not only corruption

But Lee suggested that Singaporean investors were concerned not only about corruption but also about contracts being scuttled or nullified by Philippine courts.

He said Philippine officials and businessmen should first "make a point" to show that the environment is "improving," then there were "attractive opportunities" for investors to consider, and that investors would be assured that "as the project develops, they will be looked after."

Lee, however, said Ms Arroyo had explained what she was doing in that regard. "I think that would be very helpful," he said.

Ex-site said Singaporean companies have—like Singtel, Globe Telecom and Keppel...seen doing well.

### Wide range of concerns

Lee said he and Ms Arroyo had discussed a wide range of concerns, such as expanding trade, investments and tourism exchanges, increasing cooperation on antiterror plans such as exchange of information and introduction of terrorist funds, and enhancing collaboration.

He said he had also prepared the reorganization and expansion of the air agreement between Singapore and the Philippines.

He noted that there were only 17 flights a week between the two countries, compared to 200 with Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur and 400 with Bangkok and Jakarta.

"It's really out of proportion to the potential that we could develop if [we] have more flights," Lee said.

Ms Arroyo said she would consider the proposal, but policy directions being mapped Thursday the aviation industry.

She said the Philippines was inviting more Singaporean tourists and that the government would go out "[o]pportunities so Singaporean budgets airlines" that would use the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.

### Fresh start

Lee, who was accompanied here by his wife Ho Ching, executive director and CEO of Temasek Holdings, graduated with first class honors in mathematics.

He holds a diploma in computer science from the University of Cambridge, and also attended the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Ms Arroyo said Lee represented "a new generation in Asia, a fresh start in the world." She said she was impressed by the "breadth and depth" of his world view.

### Hospitality praised

Lee praised Filipino hospitality for his second visit, his first as premier.

"I deeply appreciate President Arroyo's kind invitation and very generous hospitality, particularly at a time of crisis of storms and preoccupation for her because of the recent typhoons that hit Luzon," he said.

He expressed his condolences to the typhoon victims "and also to the Philippines generally."

"The President briefed me on the situation and I'm quite sure the Philippine people will [show] a great deal of courage and determination and cope with this most adversity," he said.

### Seed money

A member of the Singaporean business group said the Singapore government had donated $50,000 for the disaster victims. The amount was used as "seed money" for contributions from Singaporean firms and organizations and would be entrusted through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

# Bad news . . .

Front page A1

sued Wednesday, until further notice, the government will not process applications filed after January 2005. With this change, what has been a 60-day wait for a US work permit could now drag on for three years or more.

"It's basically going to cut them off," said Charles Oppenheim, head of the State Department's immigration visa section division.

Recruiters have long sought nurses from the Philippines, where schools train nurses for work in the United States. The change could leave a gaping hole for hospitals across the country that increasingly rely on foreign-born nurses to bridge a nursing shortage.

### Aging US population

Authorities have warned that the US could face a shortage of roughly 275,000 nurses by 2020, when baby boomers are entering their golden years. Technology will likely reduce the number of nurses needed in the future, but the aging US population will require more.

Nurses in the United States earn more than the Philippine average yearly salary of a doctor or engineer and not almost if nurses within the country.

"If the industry has ready access to nurses from salvadores, they would never address why we don't have a sufficient domestic nursing work force," said Cheryl Peterson, senior policy expert for the American Nurses Association.

But in the short term, the change would leave hospitals, health-care centers in Nichols said.

### RP major source of nurses

"The Philippines is our major source of imported nurses. We've been doing that at a clip of thousands a year for a while now," said Nichols, vice president of the Center for Applying Health Systems Change, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, D.C. based in Utah.

Nurses are one of the workers affected by the change. Doctors and tech workers also fall in the same category but the work permit options for nurses are more limited under immigration rules.

Robert Salazar, 31, a nurse from the Philippines, said he would keep his job if his visa lapsed in July and is awaiting his green card.

"It's better pay and less patients," Salazar said of his job.

But for now worries that friends and family in the Philippines will have to wait years for the same opportunity.

Canadian and Mexican nurses are also obtain visas to work in the United States under the North American Free Trade Agreement. But not enough Canadian opt to re-unite south, while Mexican nurses are often stifled by low numbers of US-qualified nurses, Nichols said.

The new quota limit is actually the indirect result of a more efficient immigration process. After Sept. 11, 2001, the system experienced a backlog due to updated security measures. More nurses were working in the Philippines and in a lesser extent, India and mainland China, got by on temporary work permits as they waited for their "number" to come up in a green card.

Now those same are being processed. The government said in beginning Jan. 1, they would no longer issue new temporary work permits for workers from those countries until it had dealt with the backlog, which could take several years.

Immigration attorney Carl Shusterman, 2006, then represented hospitals throughout California and helps about 300 Filipino nurses a year find jobs in the United States, and he frequently obtained work permits for qualified nurses in no time, allowing them to work as they wait the roughly three years for their permanent residency. AP


Alaga ka na, panalo ka pa!

Announcing the November weekly draw winners of

| NOV. 1 Pampanga Draw | WEEK 4 Mandaluyong Draw | WEEK 7 Cebu Draw | WEEK 8 San Juan Draw |
|---|---|---|---|
| ₱15,000 1st Prize | ₱10,000 1st Prize | ₱15,000 1st Prize | ₱15,000 1st Prize |
| ₱10,000 2nd Prize | ₱15,000 2nd Prize | ₱10,000 2nd Prize | ₱10,000 2nd Prize |
| ₱5,000 3rd Prize | ₱5,000 3rd Prize | ₱5,000 3rd Prize | ₱5,000 3rd Prize |
| ₱1,000 4th Prize | ₱1,000 4th Prize | ₱1,000 4th Prize | ₱1,000 4th Prize |
| ₱500 5th Prize | ₱500 5th Prize | ₱500 5th Prize | ₱500 5th Prize |

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Nasa dugo lang 'yan!

ADMU'S Jennifer Bahiano spikes against Ateneo's Robin de Leon in the game won by ADU. INQUIRER/LYN RILLON

# Favorites top foes in Petron 'volley'

THE FAVORITES were all business yesterday at the start of the fourth and final leg of the 2004 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball Tournament at the Cuneta Sports Center.

Patricia Sloten and Jennifer Bahiano, back-to-back champions of the league's initial offering last year, dubbed the pair of Ruby de Leon and Jean May de la Rosa, 21-15.

Not to be outdone, the Philippine Navy cousins of Michelle Laborte and Cecille Tabuena, the team's 3rd big gunner this year, crushed Michelle Pisaro and Lorelyn Jimenez, 21-10.

Petron Advertising and Promotions vice-president Cher Che Tagbanua graced the opening rites with Cuneta Sports Center owner Boy Cuneta and Ateneo volley organizer Tuba Miranda.

BAGUIO TILT

# Nike Golf virtual Am champion

By Marong R. Castillo

BAGUIO CITY—Southwoods and Del Monte drew 39s from young ranks in their respective runners and gained some ground on Nike Golf Friday in the consequence RI division of the 55th FIL-Am Golf Invitational here.

Arnante Antero assembled a medal three-under-par 66 and Ferraro Arevalo had two birdies and an eagle in a five-hole stretch at John Hay's back nine as Del Monte turned in a day-best 154 to make it at three-way tie heading into the final 36 holes.

Southwoods took two points off Nike's overnight 14-point lead as Jun Jun Flaza signed for a 77, Artemio Mendoza a 36 and Michael Bibat a 33 for 147 and a second solo slot over the leading team's all-star lineup struggled.

Jovic Pagsanan turned in a 36, Jun Bonds and Boyet Jaragasa fired 36s and Jay Bayron hiked to runner-up with a 35 despite two eagles for the round as Nike totaled 145 for the day for a 294 overall lead.

Del Monte, represented by the core of its 1982 Interclub-winning squad, was seven 36 points down from 22 at the start of the round as play shifts to the short but supposedly doubles Baguio Country Club course for the final round.

While Nike Golf's FB team ran in as a semblance of opposition, in the squad practically wrapped things up after a 12th at the par-61 302-yard 8 a 20-point advantage over Southwoods and a 53-point bubble over Del Monte.

Tommy Manotoc, who put the two-bike teams together in his capacities as vice-president for international sales of a three-year absence, felt confident of a double kill.

"I feel we have the players with the skills and the experience to withstand any comeback (in the 36-hole format)," said Manotoc, who teamed in a record straight 36 for the Asia team that runs in the Philippines.

"Having any major misfortune, like sets of our (five) players being disqualified, we have it in the bag," joked the 55-year-old Manotoc.

Former pro Jove Hernandez banked up Manotoc with a 70, JR Vergara registered a 34 and Ferraro "Tantruman" Ines then had to count with his 36.

The low than-for-Nike Golf's has partners could muster were identical 122s. Nike five had a 35 to pace Southwoods and Ilumen Sy's 51, RC Gutierrez turned in a 30 and Oka Arce a 35 as Teddy Bautista's 18 did not count.

Boy Milton signed for a 33 to pace Del Monte, which now has a 232 tally after 36 holes. Jun Hete (30), Arnulfo Mendiola (32) and Alfonso Nike (27) were the other scorers for Del Monte.

The tournament, with Ilumen as main presenter, drew a total of 1,401 players in seven divisions.

It is being supported by Northern Airlines, Royal 3 Caribbean, Lantaw Amadeus, Wilmar

Sports, Heritage Park, Cultura, Cirtek Epiware, Lamchem-Hapee, San Miguel, Avent, Ayala Land, Club Manitou Spa and Color Corp.

# Liza, Chester enter q'finals

SINGAPORE—Asia's top-ranked bowler, Liza del Rosario of the Philippines, cruised to the women's quarterfinals in the 40th ABF bowling World Cup yesterday by downing an eight-game series of 1,750 pinfall at the Singapore Indoor Stadium here.

With her 29-game qualifying total of 5018 in carried over Del Rosario compiled 7078 pins to rank third, behind powerhouse Malin Dahlin of Malaysia (7102) and Shannon Pluhowsky of the United States (7106). Del Rosario averaged 225.1 for 32 games.

The other Filipino entry in the prestigious individual tourney, Chester King, also finished third in the men's side with 5561 after 29 games. King closed out his bowls on game 5665 with 1405 with the help of nephew Jason.

Australia's Ann-Maree Putney clinched in fourth at 7047, followed by Puerto Rico's Evelin Lenis (6971), Sweden's Helena Johansson (6956), Scotland's Laura Heaney (6861) and Canada's defending champion, Stacie Ryan-Clark (6802).

DEL ROSARIO

The first match of the women's quarterfinals starts at 9 a.m. today.

It will be Dahlin against Ryan-Clark, Pluhowsky against Heaney, Del Rosario against Johnson and Putney against Lenis in best-of-three game single elimination match play.

Ryan-Clark edged Singapore's Valerie Teo by three pins to move the eighth and final spot.

Entering the final games, the Canadian was 36 pins behind the Singaporean. Ryan-Clark fired a 236 while Teo managed only 197.

Meanwhile, Del Rosario topped the 29-game field with 5006.

## SPORTSWATCH

### Castañares fights for WBF title today

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Filipino junior welter weight champion Rhoel "Diesel" Castañares of GLB Boxing Gym fights for the vacant World Boxing Federation (WBF) junior welterweight crown against New Zealander Junior Guilherme "Pantera" Mesquiera in a 12-round showdown at the Trentex ICE Stadium here. Both Mesquiera and Castañares made the 140-pound weight early during the official weigh-in supervised by WBF president Mick Crusader of Australia. Mesquiera will be marrying his girlfriend, Rubimara Daly, in a ceremony on the ringside before the fight. Castañares, with former Danny Kazzi in his corner, will be chased at "explode by his manager, Sammy "Dan Ring" Gello said.

### URBL Finals Game 1 on NBN today

THE URBL (United Regional Basketball League) best-of-three championship series will be aired over the National Broadcasting Network. Game time of the Metro showdown between the Bacoor Bay Strikers and Rizal Cheetah Cebu City Anywhere is still being played at anywhere yesterday and will be telecast at 4 p.m. today. Today's Game Two, sponsored by Lucky Me and Milkis, will be aired over NBN at 6 p.m. Game Three, if necessary, will be played on Sunday and the deal with NBN general manager Joey Isabelo let the entire country to be able to witness the intense action that drew packed crowds in Cebu, Quezon, Pampanga and Bacoor Bay. NBN reaches 22 market areas via satellite and is carried by over 400 cable operators nationwide.

### Paragua vying in Singapore Masters

ELORDE SM-candidate Mark Paragua left the country yesterday to compete in the 2004 Singapore Masters International Open which starts today at the San Ken School Alumni Association in Singapore. Paragua said the tournament will serve as a tune-up for the prospect's campaign for the Southeast Asian Games gold medal in India and the Manila SEA Games. * The nine-round Swiss system event attracted nine grandmasters, six international masters, 12 FIDE Masters (FM) and a woman grandmaster (WGM). Chinese GM Ye Jun (2,626) and Russian GM Oleg Korneev (2,602) head the highest ratings among the confirmed entries. The total prize is $5,000 with the champion pocketing $2,000. A Philippine team will also be in Singapore to compete in the Asian Youth Chess Championships to be held simultaneously with the Masters.

MARIA ISABELA CONTRERAS

# Ateneo, San Agustin booters advance

THE UNDER-14 football squad of Ateneo de Manila University has joined Colegio San Agustin in the semifinal round of the Red Ribbon Football Fiesta tournament.

Gabe Hurtado, Luis Mendoza, Jiggy Gaspar and Nino Bruno scored one goal each while Mikko Mabanag added two to lead Ateneo to a 5-1 win over Manila School Thursday. Jerome Diaz scored Mabini's only goal in the 49th minute.

With the victory, Ateneo topped Group B in the elimination round. Colegio San Agustin Bacolod co-top of Group C. Xavier, also undefeated, defeated Mendiola FC, 3-0, and is level on points with second-ranked St. Jude in Group A.

Jiggy Gaspar hit the back of the net in the 26th and 27th minutes, while Alfonso Dans scored in the 40th to lead Xavier to the victory.

Meanwhile, the 7-a-side PFF-Nef Ribbon football festival is set Dec. 19 at the dunes grounds in Kampanas. It is the Philippine Footfull-bohemian's last event of the year.

Red Ribbon Bakeshop has offered its current tournament and the Dec. 19 festival as a venue to scout players for the PFF-UAAP National Team project. Ito Alcuaz, call Hilda Obregon at the PFF at 8451500 or any inquiries to Dumpling Pastel Pensacola at (045)-9660000.

# Gold Cup on tomorrow

ALL SIGNS lead to the Santa Ana Park course now as 13 of the country's most accomplished thoroughbreds vie for the PCSO Presidential Gold Cup, local racing's Holy Grail and definitive test of championship worthiness.

The top contenders for the 2,000-meter classic include returning champions Sol Star Kirang (2003) and Free Wind (2002), division standouts Lover Girl, Empire Rising and Dandarianyo and three-time Gold Cup campaigner Lyonnais, in what promises to be a battle for the ages. Also in the hunt for the premier spot are classy 5-year-olds Mitos Bound, Plan Hero, Kidapawan and Dibutso.

Acclaim in the country's richest horse race is P15 million in prizes, with the winner guaranteed to take home P13.5 million and a replica of the Presidential Gold Cup to be awarded by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The handicapper for the premier spot in this year's Gold Cup is predicted to be a multi-open season.

# Harbour Centre teams win

TEAM B U/Harbour Center Port Terminal Inc.'s 4 and 5 home bagged back-the Competitive and Fellowship division plums in the 2004 Rev. Democrito Barcelon Basketball Cup—an all-in Sells Alumni basketball league hosted by La Salle Greenhills president Bro. Bernie Oca.

The twin victories by Team B U/Harbour Center, led by former players Hilbert and Wilkie Rubenes, was the first in the league's eight-year history.

Team B U-4 is skippered by former La Salle Midwest Reds Dingdong Jones and composed of former PBA players Jimmy Pacursa, Jerry Sta. Maria, Dwight Lago, Amor Soulez, together with PBL players Rob Arevalo, 2004 Competitive division MVP Francis Zamora, Mike Magtipon, Judge Primero, and Wilson coach Calvo Cimatu.

Team B U-5 finished unbeaten and bested Shell Velocity Team in the Fellowship division finals.

TEAM B U/Harbour Centers A and B teams jubilate after bagging the competitive and Fellowship crowns, respectively, in the awarding ceremonies of the 2004 Rev. Bernardo Basketball Cup.

# Ho, ho, ho: House committee plays Santa to Pagcor

By Carlos Pabio

STANLEY Ho of Macau and other foreign casino magnates are close to getting a foothold in the local gambling scene.

The House committee on legislative franchises has vowed to rush approval of a measure which, among others, will allow the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. to create joint ventures with "foreign corporate or legal entities."

The proposed measure amending the Pagcor charter is embodied in House Bill No. 3489 sponsored by Representatives Federico Sandoval Lakas, Makabayan-Navotas) and Mauricio Domogan (Lakas, Baguio City).

The bill hopes to enable Pagcor to "dock floating casinos in any part of the Philippines."

Ho, who attempted to make his presence felt in the country during the abbreviated term of deposed President Joseph Estrada, is particularly known for his floating casinos and entertainment.

The measure will allow Pagcor to put up gaming establishments "whether on land or sea" but must "consult" with concerned local government units.

According to the bill, gaming can be done "at anytime of the day or night."

Pagcor can "establish and operate clubs and casinos for amusement and recreation, including sports, games, goods, basketball, football, lotteries, bingo parlors, etc.) and other forms of amusement and recreation including games of chance."

It says also "hotel inns, motels, pavilions and entry use structures of every kind and for any lawful purpose ... including but not limited to joint venture agreements or similar agreements with local or foreign corporate or legal entities."

The proposed measure extends Pagcor's franchise, which expires on July 11, 2008, for another 25 years. It also provides a second renewal of another 25 years, or a guaranteed corporate life of 50 years from 2008.

The bill, however, does not allow the agency to operate jai alai—the Bacolod bull game once popular in Metro Manila.

Also, Pagcor gaming areas will "not be openly accessible to the general public."

Persons allowed to play are tourists, foreigners and Filipinos with a gross monthly income of P50,000, and two spouses of the said qualified players provided that such guests are at least 21 years old.

With the endorsement of the bill by the House committee on legislative franchises, the measure will be subjected to floor debates and approval depending on the chamber's schedule.

It will need a counterpart measure from the Senate, after which the reconciled bill will have to be approved by the two chambers of Congress, and then signed by the President for it to be ensured into law.

STANLEY HO

# Garcia defends GSIS reforms, cites P40-B unpaid premiums, P25-B bad loans

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) general manager Winston Garcia yesterday justified the drastic reforms he implemented at the state pension fund, saying these were meant to prolong the lifespan of GSIS coffers which have been cut by more than half from 65 years in 1997 to 31 years in 2002.

Addressing members of the Philippine Government Employees Association in Malacañang on Thursday, Garcia hared the precarious financial situation of the GSIS and appealed for more understanding and appreciation for his policies.

"I also want to be loved just like any one of you, it's human nature," said Garcia, who has been vilified by many employees who have been grumbling over the undue delays in the release of their pension and their loans.

Garcia, who took over the GSIS post when President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power in 2001, said the state pension fund's dwindling resources forced him to implement reforms, particularly the establishment of a computerized online system that tackled GSIS paper records in one database.

Garcia made a presentation on the dramatic decline in the fund's actuarial life—losses of roughly six years annually—which have been due to poor collections (67.5 percent) that has translated to P40 billion in unpaid premiums and over P25 billion of loans in default.

"Your loans were traced to the absence of a reliable membership profile and the lack of an appropriate agencies accounts management system to keep track of remittances and payments. GSIS had relied solely on government remittances for members' service records.

Garcia said these loopholes in the GSIS were exploited by "unscrupulous persons in and out of the GSIS" who took out pensions and loans granted to dead or fictitious members and non-existing members.

Through the computerization program, Garcia said the GSIS was able to purge its membership from 2.7 million to 1.3 million, update and reconcile its service profiles; and speed up the withdrawal of loans and processing of claims.

Aside from the computerization program, Garcia said he also instituted a premium based policy that ensured that the benefits equal the premiums paid by members.

# RP sailor missing, 11 others saved as ship runs aground

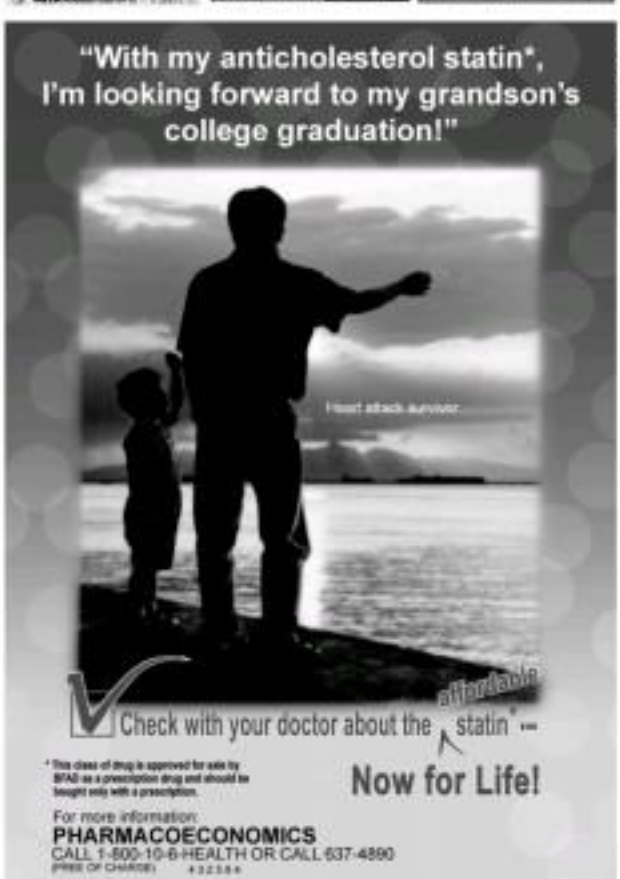
By TJ Burgonio

A FILIPINO crewman went missing after a helicopter that plucked him and several others from their sinking Malaysian cargo vessel crashed into the icy blanket-sea during rescue operations last Wednesday night, and rescuers (base the search.

Foreign affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said the Philippine Consulate General in San Francisco, United States, which has jurisdiction over Alaska, was directed to coordinate with the US Coast Guard for any information on the missing Filipino.

Secretary Alberto Romulo has instructed Undersecretary Jose Brillantes and the consul general to hire Pinkerton to extend "all possible assistance" to the Filipino crewmen of the ill-fated vessel.

The 11 Filipinos were part of the 24-man crew of the vessel.

# Cuisia files P100-M suit vs wife's ...

From page B1

department against the Cuisias, charging them with 14 counts of estafa for allegedly swindling them out of P134 million.

Gerardo and Luis Jose and Cynthia Lopez supported their parents's charges in a separate complaint-affidavit.

"My name is more important than money," said Cuisia who is president of the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife), the largest and most diversified insurance firm in the country with an investment portfolio reaching P82.47 billion as of end-2003.

Cuisia said Vicky's three siblings had engaged in a vicious and malicious campaign to smear his reputation to pressure her into surrendering control of their parents' funds to them.

CUISIA with wife Vicky and brother-in-law Rene Jose in yesterday's conference.

## Using parents

Vicky used a third brother, Rene Jose, spoke to the media for the first time yesterday. They said their three siblings were leaning after the funds and were using their parents' illness to get what they wanted.

According to the Cuisias, the patriarch Bonifacio Jose suffers from "bipolar manic depressive and chronic renal disorder" which can cause the unfortunate victim to suffer outbursts of rage and mental reasoning while the mother Emilia is a diabetic with occasional mental lapses.

"When they were still in full control of their mental faculties, both my father-in-law and mother-in-law instructed me with not to let her siblings lessen their annual money mess in my wife's custody because of their fear that Vicky's three siblings would try to obtain control of the funds and totally dissipate them," Cuisia said.

## Wife's apology

Vicky apologized to her husband "for being dragged into this family controversy, being the innocent victim of a malicious attack on his character which he had religiously preserved for himself and his family."

She said her husband was never involved in any of the companies of the Joses, much less in the management of any funds belonging to the Joses.

Vicky and Rene said the funds entrusted to the complaint were intact and safely invested with private banks.

The family's core business is real estate and property management. Vicky has been the treasurer and custodian of the Jose family coffers for more than 20 years, apart from being a substantial stockholder of the firms.

## 'Pure baloney'

Rene said the amount of P134 million being claimed in the complaint filed by their parents was "pure baloney."

He said the original amount reportedly entrusted to the Cuisias was P74 million, out of which the little payments were reduced to the amount were down to P41 to P42 million. He said the funds grew to between P62 and P65 million under his sister's stewardship.

"I have examined the accounts and records and I can categorically say that this suit against Mr. Jose Cuisia and my sister Vicky has absolutely no basis," Rene said.

A businessman based in Pennsylvania in the United States, Rene said he has been flying back and forth for the past three months trying to settle the conflict among his siblings. He is a trustee and co-signatory with the parents of the disputed accounts.

## Internal problem

"My siblings are meeting undue influence over my parents, thus creating this embarrassing situation for the family. As such, I would like to say this is an internal family problem and should not involve Mr. Jose L. Cuisia who has absolutely nothing to do with these accounts," he said.

He said his siblings were "in dire need" of money but he could not tolerate resorting to foul means. He said the three siblings who filed suit against the Cuisias have been living off the family's funds for the past few years, receiving ample salaries and their share of dividends.

## Bankruptcy

In the 1970s, Vicky recalled that the Jose family corporations lowered heavily in a construction project in Malaysia run by her brothers Gerardo and Luis. She said this project had failed because of "lack of expertise and poor management."

"My brother Luis left the family corporation as he on his own. My sister Cynthia was one to retired in the family corporation," she said.

Vicky said she and her parents and some loyal employees had worked hard to rehabilitate the company. In 2000, she said the company was able to pay off its debts and free up their mortgaged properties.

"As the treasurer, I built up earnings from corporate funds which are substantially intact. My parents have been regularly updated of the financial status of the companies," she said.

"Thirty years of hard work and sacrifices have not gone that the Jose corporations are in a better shape, my siblings Gerardo, Luis and Cynthia want to take control of the funds that were under my stewardship for years, "Vicky said.

"They ought to be reminded that the corporate dividends took care of the daily upkeep and maintenance of my parents, their regular travel expenses here and abroad and the enormous medical bills. All my siblings also shared in the dividends," she said.

Each sibling receives about P500,000 a year in dividends from the company.

Vicky said Rene and their three estranged siblings had taken over the management of some of the companies and had been recklessly guarding their parents.

## No access to parents

Vicky said she had not been given access to her parents since August this year.

"I now only request that they bring my dad and mom to their physician for their continued health care because we know that both my parents have not seen their attending physician for over a month now, despite our pleas," she said.

"I have always persisted my parents I will take care of them and have done so for more than 20 years and will do so while both are alive. I have no interest or wage whatsoever to my heart for my parents, for I know that they are both are well. My parents are very loving persons, most especially my blessing, and I will continue to love and serve them to the best of my ability," she said.

# Why lefties . . .

From page A1

ers, golfers, cricketers and golf clubs designed for the right-handed majority.

Statistical evidence links several **mis-immune** diseases, such as rheumatoid bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis, with left-handedness.

Under Darwin's principles of evolution, genes that hamper survival of the species should get weeded out.

So it is a small mystery as to why the left-handed have not gone the way of the dinosaurs.

## Evolutionary boon

French audio-speleologist believe they have the answer: left-handedness, far from being a disadvantage, is an evolutionary boon.

Their theory is that left-handers survived—and to some extent survive—because they more lawyer or fighting, having a built-in advantage in combat with a right-handed opponent.

Charlotte Faurie and Michel Raymond, of the Institute of Evolutionary Sciences at the University of Montpellier in southern France, compared the number of left-handed people with the number of homicides in eight traditional societies where the weapon was a knife or a machete.

They analyzed data from eight societies: the machete-wielding Fataal people of Dominica, the Wanangwa people of Cameroon; the Otoola-speaking people of Burkina Faso; the Bida people in Gabon; the Fijin people of Irian Jaya, and Irian people in Alaska, Greenland and Canada; the Iliti of Papua New Guinea; and the Yanomamo of Venezuela.

## Most killings

The societies which had the most killings had the most left-handed people, they found.

At the most powerful end of the scale, the Otoola had a homicide rate of sixty one hundredth of a death per 1,000 people per year, while left-handedness occurred only among 2 percent of the population.

At the other end of the scale, the Yanomamo had four homicides per 1,000 inhabitants per year, while left-handers accounted for a huge 22.6 percent of their population.

Faurie and Raymond do not say that to be lefthanded is a source of violence and they stress that violence can also have a range of complex causes.

What the data does imply is that the genes for lefthandedness have survived because, quite literally, in distant past, they helped their owners survive in the human jungle.

## Fighting hypothesis

"This result strongly supports the fighting hypothesis," the pair say. "Most generally, it points to the importance of violence in understanding the evolution of handedness." In traditional societies, individual combat has important consequences. The winner becomes the alpha male, gaining in social status and becoming an attractive mating prospect.

The idea behind their theory—published on Wednesday in Proceedings B of the Royal Society, Britain's de-facto Academie of Science—comes from sport, where the southpaw technique often gets the better of confused right-handers.

Lefthanders have an advantage in sports involving dual confrontation, such as boxing, tennis and baseball (pitchers against batters) but not in non-interactive sports such as gymnastics," the study says.

The research was tested only on traditional societies where there was a **bloder** risk of one-on-one combat, rather than in **theorerinal** societies.

In industrialized cultures, the theoretical advantage enjoyed by lefthanders would be canceled out by long-range weapons such as the gun. AFP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The WORLD

Editor Lenorne B. Gusco

# Bush administration backs UN's Annan

UNITED NATIONS—The Bush administration expressed confidence in UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Thursday and said he should stay in office, in a belated rebuff to demands from Republicans in Congress for his resignation.

US ambassador John Danforth called reporters together to deliver the comments, saying that he had to clarify the US position after his colleagues and the media believed the United States government was not supporting Annan.

"We are expressing confidence in the secretary general and his continuing in office," Danforth said, adding that he was speaking for the White House and state department.

"No one in my knowledge has cast doubt on the personal integrity of the secretary general. No one," he said.

US Sen. Norm Coleman, a Minnesota Republican, who was later joined by five congressmen, last week called for the resignation of Annan, who has two more years in office before completing his second five-year term.

They accused him of presiding over corruption in the UN oil-for-food program for Iraq, administered by the United Nations but supervised by the 15-nation Security Council.

After Coleman's statement, President George W. Bush principally refused to defend Annan, saying he wanted a "full and open accounting" of the now-defunct oil-for-food program.

In reaction, the 191-member UN General Assembly gave Annan a standing ovation on Wednesday and the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Australia telephoned the secretary-general to voice support.

In an open letter on Thursday a group of South African Nobel Laureates—former president Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and writer Nadine Gordimer—condemned attempts to have Annan resign. They said the real reason for the attack was "the administration by the secretary-general in respect of certain actions of the United States government in Iraq."

Danforth again called for a thorough investigation.

"The worst thing, to continue the cloud over an organization, is to give the impression that something is being hidden or that there is no total cooperation," he said. "And that really is deadly in any kind of an organization and that would have to be resolved."

But he said, "Our view of the performance of the secretary-general is that he has done a good job, that he is doing a good job, that we have worked with him, that we anticipate working with him in the future.

He noted Annan's help on the crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan and on planned elections in Iraq.

Danforth also played down reports that Annan's son, Kojo, had not fully disclosed his role in a firm hired by the United Nations to inspect goods in Iraq. The younger Annan worked for the Swiss company Cotecna in West Africa.

"The son is an adult and I think generally speaking there is a perceived difference and a real difference between adult children and parents," he said. dyanews

**FOR INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS**
A group of students from all over the world who attend The United World College of Hong Kong pose for a group picture during a cultural performance designed to raise awareness of International Human Rights Day in Hong Kong Dec. 10. AFP

## Halliburton gets more than $10B of work in Iraq

WASHINGTON—The largest US contractor in Iraq, Halliburton Co., has passed the $10 billion mark in work orders from the American Army for services supporting troops and rebuilding the country's oil industry.

The Army has $8.3 billion worth of work done Halliburton under a contract to support soldiers with meals, heating, laundry and other services. Halliburton got $1.5 billion more in work from the Army Corps of Engineers to put out oil well fires and shore up Iraq's illegitimate oil infrastructure.

Allegations of financial misdeeds, including corruption and overcharging, have led to criminal, congressional and Pentagon investigations of Halliburton's work in Iraq.

Congressional critics say George W. Bush's administration is giving easy on the oil services company which Vice President Dick Cheney ran from 1995 to 2000. Cheney and Halliburton deny any preferential treatment.

Rep. Henry Waxman of California, the top Democrat on the House government reform committee, has been one of the main congressional critics of Halliburton. Waxman issued a statement Thursday criticizing the Army's decision not to withhold partial payments to Halliburton while some accounting issues are straightened out.

"The mounting value of the contract has been accompanied by a growing list of concerns about Halliburton's performance," the statement said.

Halliburton spokesperson Wendy Hall said the company has done a good job serving troops and helping to rebuild Iraq.

"The Army statement is simply recycling old, unfounded allegations in an effort to discredit a company that is providing much-needed services in support of our troops on the ground in the Iraq and Kuwait," Hall said.

The investigations of Halliburton's work in Iraq include:

- A criminal investigation into whether kickbacks were involved in Halliburton's use of a Kuwaiti subcontractor to provide gasoline for Iraq's civilian market. Halliburton says it cooperated fully with authorities after an internal probe found two of its former employees may have been involved in corruption worth $6.3 million.
- A review of that deal ordered by the Defense Contract Audit Agency, which concluded Halliburton overcharged the Army by $61 million.
- An investigation by the Iraqi Coalition Provisional Authority's internal watchdog which found Halliburton could owe account for some of items to Iraq worth millions of dollars.
- A report by Congress' Government Accountability Office, which found a "pattern of unnecessary management problems" by the Army on Halliburton's largest Iraq contract. The nonpartisan GAO said the problems including sending more than a year to finalize the documentation on work orders worth billions of dollars.
- A Pentagon audit, which found that Halliburton charged the Army for meals it never served to troops. Halliburton said the problem was caused by the widely fluctuating levels of troops in and around Iraq. Halliburton has repaid $36 million and set aside more than $140 million for a possible settlement as it negotiates with the Army on that issue. AP

# Canada to change meaning of marriage to include gays

OTTAWA—Canada's Supreme Court on Thursday gave the government the go-ahead to change the definition of marriage, a historic victory for gay and lesbian groups battling for equal rights.

The ruling, on a draft law, cleared the final obstacle for Canada to follow the Netherlands and Belgium in sanctioning same-sex marriage.

Ministers in Ottawa say they expect to have the law when the government introduces it to the House of Commons early next year.

The court also ruled that religious officials would not be compelled to marry same-sex couples, if the practice ran counter to their beliefs.

It declined to address the question of whether a change in the laws regarding same-sex marriage was required by the Constitution, a move that could complicate the task of shepherding the draft law through parliament.

Prime Minister Paul Martin said he had wrestled with the issue, but did not believe Canada could have "two classes of citizens."

"I think we are a very mature nation. I think we can understand that kind of debate," he said.

Alex Munter, of lobby group Canadians for Equal Marriage, said the move reflected "Canadian values and Canadians' commitment to fairness."

Thursday's ruling was a blow to advocates of traditional marriage, who want the government to prevent definitions between couples of the same sex, but not sanction full-scale marriages.

"My position will be to preserve the traditional definition of marriage in the law," said opposition Conservative leader Stephen Harper.

"The government bill is going to be about obviously redefining," he said.

The government had taken the unusual step of asking for a Supreme Court ruling on draft legislation last year.

Government plans would see the definition of marriage changed to the "lawful union of two persons," rather than the "lawful union of one man and one woman."

While the government was awaiting for a judgment before changing federal law on same-sex marriage, courts in six Canadian provinces and one territory had already ruled that same-sex unions were legal. AFP

A NATIVITY scene from Poland is displayed during a "Joy to the World" exhibit Dec. 9 in Washington, DC. More than 150 nativity scenes from around the world will be displayed during the fourth annual international creche exhibit. AFP

# Leading atheist now believes in God

By Richard N. Ostling

NEW YORK—A British philosophy professor who has been a leading champion of atheism for more than a half-century has changed his mind. He now believes in God—some or less—based on scientific evidence, and says so in a video released Thursday.

At age 81, after decades of insisting belief is a mistake, Antony Flew has concluded that some sort of intelligence or first cause must have created the universe. A major motivator for the only general explanation for the origin of life and the complexity of nature, Flew said in a telephone interview from England.

Flew said he's been labeled a deist like Thomas Jefferson, whose God was not actively involved in people's lives.

"I'm thinking of a God very different from the God of the Christians and far and away from the God of Islam, because both are depicted as omnipotent Oriental despots, cosmic Saddam Husseins," he said. "It could be a person in the sense of a being that has intelligence and a purpose, I suppose."

Flew first made his mark with the 1950 article "Theology and Falsification," based on a paper for the Socratic Club, a notably Oxford religious forum led by writer and Christian thinker C.S. Lewis.

Over the years, Flew proclaimed the lack of evidence for God while teaching at Oxford, Aberdeen, Keele, and Reading universities in Britain, as well as numerous US and Canadian campuses and in books, articles, lectures and debates.

There was no one moment of change but a gradual conclusion over recent months for Flew, a copy must who still does not believe in an afterlife.

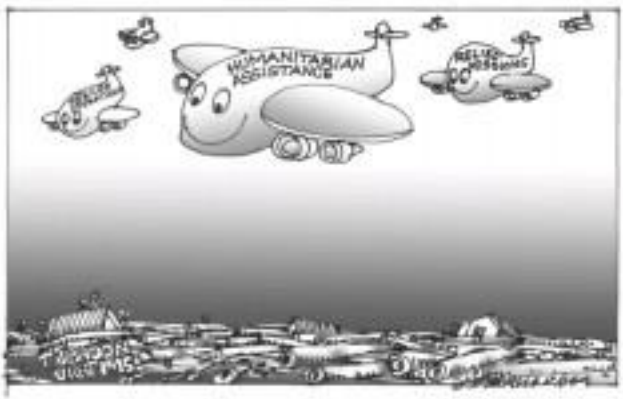
"All biologists' investigation of DNA, "has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life)...that intelligence must have been involved," Flew says in the new video, "Has Science Discovered God?"

The video shows from a New York discussion last May organized by author Roy Abraham Varghese's Institute for Metaphysical Research in Garland, Texas. Participants were Flew; Varghese; Israeli physicist Gerald Schroeder, an Orthodox Jew; and Roman Catholic philosopher John Haldane of Scotland's University of St. Andrews.

The first issue of Flew's new was a letter to the August/September issue of Britain's Philosophy Now magazine. "It has become increasingly difficult for Darwinists to begin to think about constructing a naturalistic theory of the evolution of the first reproducing organism," he wrote. AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

# OPINION




## Rage

CONGRESSMEN seem to have been shocked by the results of a Pulse Asia survey showing an overwhelming majority of Filipinos rejecting the present pork barrel system. Many of them have challenged the polling organization to do a survey in their districts so that it would see how wrong its findings were. "The survey does not reflect the reality on the ground," House Deputy Majority Leader Eduardo Gullas complained. The reality is that "our constituents appreciate the projects we're bringing home through the pork barrel," he said.

**EDITORIAL**

They must have shy constituencies, indeed. And those probably consist of little more than the contractors, project engineers, auditors, mayors and other local officials who get to share in the kickbacks (called "SOP")—after the lawmaker has taken the lion's share, of course. They will surely vote for the retention of the pork barrel and even ask that it be increased a hundredfold if possible.

As for the rest of the Filipinos, the general sentiment is for either the reduction of the size of the congressional pork barrel or its abolition altogether. According to the nationwide Pulse Asia poll, only 15 percent of the 1,200 people surveyed favored keeping the pork barrel at its present level. On the other hand, almost twice that number, or 30 percent, wanted it eliminated, while 54 percent believed the amount ought to be reduced. Which means that 84 percent are not exactly purring with glee like chimpanzees over the way their money is being handled by their representatives in Congress.

And why should they? About 8 out of every 10 people surveyed (79 percent) believed that at least one-half of a project's cost went into the pockets of corrupt government officials, said Pulse Asia research fellow Emmanuel de Dios.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the survey findings simply validated his observation that "the wrongdoing of a few lawmakers . . . has created a negative public perception of the system." But he is being much too kind to his fellow lawmakers. If 79 percent of Filipinos believe that pork barrel projects are tainted with corruption, can that be the handiwork of just a few bad men? If that statistic proves anything, it is not that the perception of corruption is widespread but that corruption is really widespread. Lawmakers may think they can fool all of the people all of the time, but this survey shows that they cannot fool most of the people most of the time.

And yet, De Dios observed, even as "prevalent opinion" considers most pork-barrel projects to be tainted with corruption, there remains a "widespread belief that it is a legislator's duty to deliver projects and programs to his constituents." The majority still far narrowly inclining, rather than totally eliminating, the pork barrel appears to be a pragmatic compromise," he said.

This is probably the most disturbing finding of all: that so many are convinced that taxpayers' money is being stolen and yet so few would demand that the source of graft and corruption be shut off completely. Maybe corrupt practices have become so commonplace and so ordinary that they no longer shock or scandalize us. It seems as if we have learned to accept corruption not only as a fact of life but as a way of life. As former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew once put it: And we have lost our sense of outrage and our capacity to rage against effete wrongdoing.

But rage we must unless we intend to allow our lawmakers to continue picking our pockets in the guise of serving us. It is not other people's money that they are stealing, it is our money. They are furnishing themselves at the expense of those who have nothing to eat.

## Gloomy lesson

THE TURMOIL struck on the 10 countries in Ardith was a grim reminder that storms for tropical ecotypes are still able to operate as well in the tropics. Quick responses by local security forces ensured that casualties and damage were limited, though the choice of targets—one of the most hostile defended in the country—was itself a signal that air raids and its offshoots have not given up. In recent months, the Saudi authorities have arrested and killed many members of Al Qaeda-linked terrorist groups"—emphasizing the deputies' limit the true scale of Islam—while weapons finds have become scarce.

**FOREIGN COMMENT**

The Saudi government . . . argues that it has the situation well under control. . . . But pessimists insist that it is only a matter of time before another attack on the mighty Saudi oil industry, the reason for the country's close relationship with the United States. The gloomy nature of recent years is that the pessimists in the Middle East are always often proved right.

*The Guardian (London)*

## Unenforced convictions are acquittals

**SEPARATE OPINION**

*Jaime A. Cruz*

FORMER SENATE President Jovito R. Salonga sent me by personal delivery copy of the letter of Bureau Kasunggan ex Solicitor General Alfredo L. Benipayo dated Oct. 28, 2004 and received by his office on Nov. 8, regarding the convictions in 1995 of Bernabe Dizon(Bong) Marcos Jr. for tax evasion.

The case was decided against the accused by the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City (Branch 105) on July 25, 1997 and appealed to the Court of Appeals, which affirmed the sentence on Dec. 31, 1997. Through Justice Gloria C. Perez, the dispositive portion of the judgment read:

"WHEREFORE, the Decision of the Trial Court is hereby MODIFIED as follows:

1. Sentencing the accused-appellant of the charges of violation of Sec. 10 of the RADC for non-payment of deficiency taxes for the taxable years 1982 to 1985 in Criminal Cases Nos. Q-92-39230, Q-92-39231, Q-92-39234 and Q-92-44900, and finding him guilty beyond reasonable doubt for violation of Sec. 86 of the NIRC for failure to file income tax returns for the taxable years 1982 to 1985 in Criminal Cases Nos. Q-92-39231, Q-92-39232, Q-92-39233 and Q-92-39237.

2. Ordering the appellant to pay to the BIR, the deficiency income taxes due with interest as the said case until fully paid.

3. Ordering the appellant to pay a fine of P1,000.00 for each charge in Criminal Cases Nos. Q-92-39231, Q-92-39232 and Q-92-39237 for failure to file income tax returns for the years 1982, 1983 and 1984, and the fine of P20,000.00 in Criminal Case No. Q-92-44901 for failure to file income tax return for 1985, with sureties.

The accused manifested his intention to file a petition for certiorari with the Supreme Court and moved for extension of time to do so. But his motion was denied and the ruling of the Court of Appeals became final and executory seven years ago but has not yet been implemented to date.

The letter ended: "In view of the unwinning fiscal crisis, as noted by the 11th Presidential, as published in the papers last August 23, 2004, and the determination of the President to pursue with vigor all tax evasion cases, we ask that immediate steps be taken so that the long-delayed execution of judgment of conviction against the said accused is carried out and the rule of law is enforced, without fear or favor."

It was signed by Salonga as adviser and drafter of Bureau Kasunggan, Ambassador Godfrey L. Gutierrez as co-chairman, and Emilio C. Capulong, Jr., as co-executive director. Both of them is a civic-minded citizens with no personal animosity toward the convict but only a sincere regard for the sanctity of the rule of law as interpreted and applied by our courts.

Meeting Solicitor General Benipayo, I am hopeful that he has taken the necessary steps to effect execution of the judgment considering the long delay of this case since it was commenced more years ago. It saddens me to see convicted through legal process, worse, fugitives officially operators as an acquittal that benefits the convict and mocks the administration of justice. It becomes especially suspicious if, as in this case, the judgment that will serve to be enforced in against a person who appears to still enjoy undeserved privileges as he did during the dictatorship of his father.

I am reminded at the point of another observation against the literature that as far as I know has also not yet been exercised when it became final as early as 1999. This was the P35.5 billion plunder case against Imelda and her children, she for tax deficiency. I understand that it has become practically useless because of the supposed inability of the government to find properties belonging to the Marcos cronies. Imelda's shoes alone would cost a fortune, but she is supposed to be a pauper litigant.

A bigger killing in luxury is no supposed home worth ago, Imelda Marcos celebrated her birthday with scandalous to be the Queen of Sheba. Allowed to go to the United States for medical treatment, the imelda an opportune dozen in Europe, where she attended the elegant wedding of a niece in Paris. Only recently, she was one of the greatest guests at the anniversary celebration of a high-priced counselor where only the billed rich were invited.

Another case that comes to mind is the 2nd court's recall conviction of Homobono Adaza that became final in 1995. Claiming that she was physically unfit to be imprisoned, she asked the Court of Appeals for a new ruling order, which it granted. The government appealed to the Supreme Court and that is the last I heard of the case. Did the conviction against her been reversed or is it still plundering with similar effect? I ask because she is free as a bird and has reportedly gone abroad several times without judicial restriction.

Judicial decisions are not mere paper tigers for law students to study like abstract notions unrelated to actual cases. They are commands issued by the courts of justice for the preservation of society against those who would disrupt it. Tragically many of such mandates are simply ignored for the benefit of privileged or paying parties. The government may use (recommended) other means will or (altogether the means to enforce them). Alas.

## Fortune versus the Filipino

**GET REAL**

*Solita Collas-Monsod*

"INDEED, it is fair to say that of this piece of legislation is not passed and signed before the Christmas break, the Filipino people will suffer untold misery with respect to the entire fiscal—and debt—problem will have been irretrievably lost."

This part of the paper by the "DP 17" (economists theirs), written four months ago, refers to the 10-percent VAT. So why should it take so long to pass such a bill, especially when it has been discussed already in at least two (not Congresses)?

The question is valid, because there are really only two simple changes that have to be made in the current tax law (RA 8424) for it to be effective. So why should it take so long to pass such a bill, especially when it has been discussed already in at least two (not Congresses)?

The question is valid, because there are really only two simple changes that have to be made in the current tax law (RA 8424) for it to be effective. So why should it take so long to pass such a bill, especially when it has been discussed already in at least two (not Congresses)?

The addition is a provision that was in the original Comprehensive Tax Reform package that the six tax levels should be adjusted periodically to reflect inflation, i.e., indexation. The version that came with the addition of a provision that was not in either the House or the Senate bills in 1997 but was inserted during the bicameral committee negotiations: "The classification of each brand of cigarettes based on its average net retail price as of December 1, 1996, as set forth in Annex D, shall remain in force until revised by Congress." In succession as it sounds (for what would possibly be dangerous about a listing?), it has proved deadly in its impact (which is why I call it a provision).

**What is the impact?** First, a ban-given unfair competitive advantage over the years to the brands existing in 1996-one those introduced after that year, because the latter pay tax rates based on their current net retail prices, while the former pay taxes based on their net retail prices, which the former pay taxes based on their net retail prices in 1996. In effect, Congress created an incentive for the latter to introduce new brands.

Second, it has deprived the government of tax revenues that under the supposed additional take from the recently approved House Bill 3554 and the Senate bill (SB 1838), which is currently under discussion, look pitta in comparison, for 2004 alone, if the cigarette brands running in 1996 were to pay taxes based on their current average net retail prices instead of on what they were eight (nine, as pointed out by the pension pill provision, it is estimated losing 2003 revenues) that the additional revenues collected would be about P21 billion. Compare that to the P9 billion-to-P15 billion in the House and Senate bills, respectively.

Actually, if push comes to shove, our legislators don't even have to add the indexation provision. They just have to delete that pension pill provision, which, because in effect, if all cigarette brands were to be taxed according to their current average net retail prices, their continuing existence will almost certainly be ruled illegal by the equal protection clause, which is what the Escobar bill seems to achieve, among other issues. Right now, for example, without the pension pill provision, there would be very few, if any, cigarette brands that would be classified under the P5.12 specific tax bracket (i.e., those whose average net retail prices is over P11).

So there is nothing wrong, and everything right, with removing that pension pill provision. It will create an even playing field in the cigarette industry. It will bring government much needed revenues-and it will really mounting fat amounts. There will be no need to argue anymore about the effort of increased taxes on the poor (the tax levels will be the same as they were in 1997, for heaven's sake). And it could be passed in the blink of an eye.

And just as a reminder, the VAT on the Bates bill over advert is it. Neither does the Senate bill for that matter, but there is a profound difference. For this bill ensures that the same end is achieved not by removing the pension pill, except by more different means.

But I am very hard to get info. Why do the two bills pretend that the pension pill is the 1997 law does not exist? Or better still, having identified the taxes because of the pension pill inaction, we must now ask, who were the writers? Identifying them would also show who would lose the most if the pension pill provision were removed, and who would have been pocketed (obviously with marked concern that led to keep the provision in).

In order to get a clue, we have to look at the issues. I referred to in the pension pill provision. It is a listing of all the cigarette brands as of Dec. 31, 1996, and their average net retail prices (exclusive of VAT and the excise taxes) at that time. What do we find there?

For one, we see that Asian Online Limited, although a new player in the tobacco industry in 96, an indication of how family that line was involved in the line for another, we see that there were five cigarette manufacturing firms responsible for manufacturing those cigarettes brands: Fortune Tobacco, La Suerte, Sterling Tobacco, Asian American, and Mighty Corp.

But how we see the light. Among those five manufacturers, one of them produces almost one half (35) of the 52 brands listed: Fortune Tobacco. It stands to reason that Fortune would have the most to gain from keeping the pension pill provision, or conversely, the most to lose if the provision were deleted.

So now it seems the fight boils down to Fortune versus the Filipino people. The House of Representatives, whether it realizes it or not, has made its choice. Now it is the Senate's turn.

# Cory's prayer power

**POLITICAL TIDBITS**

*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

FORMER PRESIDENT Cory Aquino, along with five other international leaders, among them former Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel and Timorese President Xanana Gusmao, recently received the Jewish Humanitarian Democracy Award in Washington, D.C., from the National Democratic Institution, chaired by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. They were joined with recognized as "courageous leaders of a worldwide movement to promote peaceful political change" in various continents. She right paid tribute to Cory's role in the non-violent Edsa Revolution that swept away a dictator and restored democracy here.

It proved quite timely—and refreshing—that, for a capacity crowd in Makati City to be reminded that the memory of the Edsa epic still has room to spare. Just days after the Edsa epic still has room honored a man here in Washington, D.C. At a symposium to celebrate Ninoy Aquino's birth anniversary, Cory raised how she and Ninoy "courted and the spiritual path" From opposite poles. In the end, God's plan prevailed. Ninoy became a martyr for democracy, his widow emerged as a leading Marian from his 10-year presidency.

* * *

Cory described Ninoy as a very public person in whom crisis saw opportunity. It was no secret that he had run for the Liberal Party presidential banner in 1973. By contrast, she was a very private person whose top priority was to be "a good wife and mother." Cory said she always prayed every day, especially during Ninoy's imprisonment at Fort Bonifacio and seven months, and learned to accept God's will. She cited Ninoy's "journey of spiritual rediscovery" during his long incarceration, even as his indignation and determination never left him. Ninoy never let anger or the politician, who had always seemed in command of every situation. "Full of bitterness at the start, Ninoy seriously questioned the foundations of his faith. How could a good God, after all, permit such an injustice to be inflicted upon him?"

* * *

But gratefully it dawned on him, said Cory, that he was being made to suffer for a reason deeper than the human mind could comprehend. With no one to talk to, especially during his solitary confinement at Fort Bonifacio, Ninoy turned to God and began to search for the "greater meaning" in his life. Sweeping himself in the washings of love from Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, he began to understand the wholeness of the God-related personal and social change. "It must have brought him to the conclusion that the Filipino is worth dying for, and indeed the martyrdom would awaken the very best in our people," she said.

* * *

In the end, Cory said, she and Ninoy came to the same realization about the meaning of the sacrifice they had to make. She admitted they had their own "difficult moments of seeking God's guidance" in their respective lives. Recalling, "Ninoy and I did not feel hopeless and helpless at the same time." In God would have it, he was slain at the tarmac, and so she found him for the last time in his coffin, she promised to continue his efforts to restore democracy and support the leaders of the opposition.

"At that time, I certainly was not thinking about anything for the presidency," said Cory, but in the end she became a reluctant candidate as some supportive leaders said they would help give way to her. She spent a whole day in the chapel of the Pink Sisters agonizing over that decision. At the end of the day, she tearfully told the mother superior that she had decided to run. "I must be the only candidate in recent memory to her confidence crying," she quipped.

* * *

Cory recalled that during her presidency she would turn to reflection and "my son an avowed sceptic," prayer, to help her make the right decision that would best serve the people. Today as a private citizen, she says, she confronts difficult situations in the same way.

Inevitably she had to grapple with the Hacienda Luisita episode—in her own style. Cory said a labor leader spurned her offer of prayers for those affected by the tragic developments at Luisita, and he told her, "Ma'am, we don't believe in God." Cory then said, "But my offer of prayers is really an invitation for both sides to the conflict to spend time in reflection, and with God's help discern what's best for all concerned," she said. What makes this kind of reflection one, she said, is that "despite their differences, both labor and management want to promote the welfare of the farm and mill workers." Whatever the lasting and peaceful solution might be, she said, "what is important is for all the parties concerned to reflect on what is most beneficial to the greatest number, and to come to terms on the basis of a shared humanity."

Her philosophy of life may be difficult for radical elements to appreciate, but it has borne this columnist through the seemingly heavy cross he is carry. At the end, many things are enough by prayer than this world dreams of.

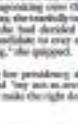
* * *

Everybody loves a good romance, and the House of Representatives is no exception. It's fielded pick-by-what looks like a romance blossoming in its midst. Reports say that two lawyers-lawmakers are beginning to make beautiful music together. Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, who filled the seat vacated by his father, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez Jr., and Pangasinan Rep. Amira Kirk Bondoc, who filled the seat vacated by her brother, Congressman Kirk Bondoc, who died in a helicopter crash last May in Mark Lapid. Even knows that Amira, who is in her early 30s, is a U.S.-trained oncologist practicing in St. Luke's Hospital when she's not in Congress. Colleagues noted that Tito Loretta's sweetheart are on a "building stage," but Speaker Jose de Venecia, who seems to be more excited about the budding romance than the Rosales lawmaker's parents, predicts that wedding bells will ring within 90 days.

# To the Inquirer—mwah!

**AT LARGE**

*Rina Jimenez-David*



LAST year marked my 15th year with the Inquirer, which I joined in 2000. There was supposed to be a anniversary bash for the occasion, but my marking significant milestones with the company, but I was in the middle of preparations for my oldest son's wedding anniversary the next day, not to mention getting ready for the Inquirer anniversary bash, and I decided to make it for the month.

The next evening, the business with marriage by empty, simple because my wedding anniversary bash was held at the Inquirer, with the marking significant milestones with the company, but I was in the middle of preparations for my oldest son's wedding anniversary the next day, not to mention getting ready for the Inquirer anniversary bash, and I decided to make it for the month.

But even if I'm usually absent from the big to do at the PDI building, missing the grand dinner and the presence of our high-wattage guests from show business and politics, that doesn't mean I don't share the news and happy feelings that permeate the usually-quiet hallways of the editorial room on our anniversary.

I remember reading an article many years back by a senior of the Inquirer Globe and Mail newspaper, in which he lamented that the "news can tell a good paper when no one wants to leave it." Because, but that's how I, and I bet the rest of the Inquirer staff, feel about working for the Inquirer. Being identified with this paper fills me with pride, and not just because we're "number 1," but also because our paper is regarded with respect and admiration. I have, I know, all positive issues can leave those cared issues.

The Inquirer may have its flaws (and the staff would be happy to list all the flaws we admit to them), but even its harshest critics must admit that given the landscape of Philippine journalism, and the challenges it has had to weather, the Inquirer has are a towering presence. So pardon us for this rare moment of crowing.

* * *

SOME weeks back, business families and former chairperson Eggie Apostol invited us to the newspaper's new home in Pasig, and the website you can view by connecting to www.inquirer.net.

THAT history, I think is what gives the Inquirer its edge, the factor that keeps this paper's coverage fresh and truly responsive to the changing times—be it advances in technology enabling online and timely delivery of news, or changes in politics.

Newspapers these days, for instance, seem more and more like compilations of short features, in contrast to, say, a decade ago, when the front pages were filled with short, to-the-point news stories. Even the broadsheets are not only longer and filled with "background" today, they are also heavy on human interest and color detail.

This is in response to the realization that today and TV and even the Internet do "breaking news" stories on an instant basis. Thus, the more serious of an event shortly after or even while it is occurring, Newspapers are nullified with "yesterday" news, still journals of the day that had gone before, but there is no better source for readers who want more in-depth explanation, analysis, color and the human aspect of events and issues.

* * *

HERE then is a heartfelt reminder to the Inquirer on its 15th year. Last year, management likened the paper to a debutante on her 15th year, who was supposed to exude one's "individuality" in society and maturity. This year, the theme is "Inquirer Rocks!" emphasizing our everyoung-old identity. But I'd like just a few years away from adulthood, which means that the paper is no longer the "new kid on the block" or even the rookie-but teenager that he seldom seen in between the paper should adopt as its permanent identity.

I'd like to offer this humble card to the paper: I write for real with a quote from the comic strip about that perennial teen icon Spiderman: "With great power comes great responsibility." The Inquirer at 24 now finds itself wielding enormous power and influence, and not just on newsprint but even in cyberspace and TV as issues. May our paper prove capable of living to the full promises of its growing power.

# Through mother's eyes

I AM 22 years old. I've been single all my life. And I've never really been in love. So what makes me think I can judge other people's relationships?

My mother has been a widow for nine years now. For the past nine years, she's been seeing a man. I don't mind her dating. But well, her current relationship, I can never really be comfortable.

I thought it would be simple. She's happy. He's happy. So it should be happy for them, too.

But that's not so. Everything is not as it seems. Not even close. She has fallen for the wrong guy. They should just stop seeing each other.

I'm lost. By sharing this story, I hope someone will tell me what to do and help me understand such love.

**YOUNG BLOOD**

*Jessa 20*

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. — Ed.*

Happiness is so complicated. Morality is so complicated. Love is so complicated. Life is so complicated.

When do we know when the line between right and wrong? Where do we set limits and when should we become selfless? When do we pursue our own happiness and when do we sacrifice it? How do we choose between love and what is right? If we have found true love in the wrong place do we have to give it up? When should the call end and the other begin? Should it always be others before you? Shouldn't we allow ourselves to be happy, too?

I have to understand. I have to put myself in my mother's shoes, see things through her own eyes. And this is how she sees it.

I fell in love with a married man and that married man fell in love with me. It was not a passing fancy. I think it was true love. Instead, he did not want to divorce his wife. He cared for each other and brought the best out of each other, but were happy when we were together. We made each other really happy.

Then he separated from his wife. But it was not only because of me. They had been having problems since the start of their marriage. After 25 years of trying to mark things out, the marriage just couldn't be fixed. His wife always pushed him away. So I was not the main cause of their separation. I just happened to be there.

When he had been looking for in his life he found in me. His sadness and hopelessness were transformed by me. His loneliness and emptiness were filled by me. Then we allowed to give up on relationships or do we have to keep on going no matter how hard or how unhappy we are? Are we moved going to find happiness in that world?)

But other people would not understand. To them it was simple: a man had left his wife and children for another woman. Then they were not understand that it was not about sex. We were friends, very special friends. We loved each other and cared for each other. We could spend the whole day together and that would be enough. He loved not only me but my family as well. But people, even my family could not see the situation in any other way because even before he separated from his wife, he was already mine.

Is what I am doing wrong? Should I just give up this love, this happiness? I have not left the love, care and protection of a man for so long. I have not been told that people ever since the first love of my life left me. Am I just being selfish?

Every time I think about giving him up, it hurts. I don't think I could bear it. We are happy. We are in love. We are very special friends.

Why can't people understand? I am 32. They should realize that I know what I am doing.

* * *

*Ina H., 32, is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University. She had written each name on account of the sensitive topic she wrote about.*

# Abandoned

*Melkizedy Maloloy*

I'M now young, vulnerable. At 17, just like other kids, he used to dreamed being a successful artist whose name was known everywhere in the world of arts. He wanted to accomplish something that would make his mother feel proud and happy. He wanted to help his mother, his sole supporter. He wished he could give her everything money could buy.

So many young dreams. So many ambitions. But in the wink of an eye, they were all gone. His dreams had been shattered. His life had turned into a nightmare.

It started when his mother, now 37, married for the second time. The guy was 26 and a drunkard. They were not really married legally—just living under one roof.

With his "stepfather" in the house, he felt like he had been dumped by his own mother. He was bare whenever he saw his mother eating and pampering his stepfather. The house became his hell. He felt like a stranger in the middle of the night, he would wake up and make some noise. He would sing very loud. He would break glasses. For what reason? He would accidentally see the two horrible making love like cavalry scenes. It was such a horrible scene for an innocent boy to witness.

What happened next was the boy got kicked out from the unbearable situation in the house he grew up in.

When his grandfather was confined in a hospital located in the public area, his parents were down to take care of him. The boy was left all by himself in the house.

His grandfather died in February 2003 and the wake was held at the house of an uncle, almost a kilometer away from the boy's house. On the first night, he was seen carrying half a sack of rice when the planned to sell in the market. He was surprised that so many were at his uncle's house. When he went inside the house, the people started laughing at the panicked expression on his face. Stupid people!

There were no tears, but he had changed. He talked sparingly. So the two hours of meaning, he wouldn't say his lunch, dinner, anything.

After 45 days of observing his crazy antics, his mother had enough of him. She ran away together with her partner. He had worried her that he would leave her if she took the boy along.

Abandoned by his own mother, the son left everyone disoriented. He was devastated.

Now you can find the boy going around some of the malls in our town. He finds happiness in the mall, in the market, in the streets where people can kick him, spit on him, punish him, curse him whenever they please.

It's hard to say and easy to accept, but that crazy kid is my cousin. He used to be a bright student, a cousin to me, but somehow he would always manage to escape.

I didn't write this to bring his plight to the attention of his mother. What is the Filipino saying? "Walang isa na mahalaman ang sugat." Well I feel blessed because she is not my mother.

* * *

*Melkizedy Maloloy, 22, works in a fast food chain as part of the service crew.*

Comments to bainbihayan@inquirer.com.ph

# Spurious letter, defiant lawmaker

LETTERS

JOPILLE Duarte's article (last Nov. 20), titled "Conflict in Palawan Council ... 2 execs wrestle for environment post," was unfair to me and misled your readers, especially the Palawefios.

First of all, the supposed endorsement made by Wowie Mangaoil-Arroyo for the appointment of Farlaac Hernandez as executive director was in the form of a photocopy brought by Energy Secretary Vince Perez to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, which then used it as the basis for declaring the position vacant. The Malacañang Records Office, however, has no copy of that supposed "letter of desire" of the President.

Second, Duarte quoted Malawan Rep. Abraham Mitra as saying that "the choice of executive director was on the President." When she didn't mention was that although the PCSD is under the Office of the President, its 69 staff members, including the executive director, are protected by Civil Service Rules, as set forth in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7611, which created the PCSD. Basically that means that no officer or employee can be removed except for cause.

On Nov 9, 2004, the Court of Appeals' 12th Division promulgated a resolution nominating the Council Dean (representing the academe) declaring the position of the executive director vacant. The order was served on Sen. Ji and Ji by a court official.

The order clearly means that I have the lawful mandate to function as executive director. However, when I requested for work on Nov. 16, Mitra and Dewandeler refused to honor the court order. Mitra himself directed the staff to go their motherboats only from Dewandeler.

Finally, it is not true that I held office at the opposite side of the street as Duarte reported. Surely she knows I couldn't have done that since there's nothing there but a vacant lot.

**—JONATON G. ARAGO, CESE,**
**executive director,**
**Palawan Council for Sustainable Development,**
**No. 1Rentas Bridge, Puerto Princesa City**

## Disappointed with SC ruling on Mining Act

THE NATIONAL Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the largest ecumenical organization Protestants and non-Roman Catholic Churches, is greatly distressed at the Supreme Court's decision reversing its earlier ruling on the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

We are concerned that with this controversial, the Supreme Court has finally succumbed to the pressures of President Macapagal-Arroyo and foreign business interests at the expense of our people.

This is a dangerous development that could lead to the perennial and the most long-lasting disasters. The miserable conditions of indigenous peoples and communities gravely affected by the destructive open pit mining and logging operations is a living testament to the flaws of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

The NCCP calls for no-stand against the liberalization of the country's mining industry by calling for the scrapping of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. The Mining Act "has allowed the unbridled extraction of our mineral resources endowed by the Almighty Creator" and "violates the patrimony and sovereignty of the country with the expropriation of the people's land for foreign mining corporations and the 100% control of equity" (Resolution on the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, NCCP Executive Committee, May 4, 1995)

More than ever, the NCCP calls on its member churches and the general public to be vigilant in pushing for the repeal of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. We also call on our lawmakers to repeal the destructive law, uphold the country's sovereignty and protect our national patrimony and avert the devastation of our God-given lands and environment.

Let us support initiatives that will enact a mining policy that is pro-people, protect the environment and pushes for the country's genuine development. We owe this to our children.

**—REBEKAH ROSE RUFUS-OVENDORES,**
**general secretary,**
**National Council of Churches**
**in the Philippines,**
**ncep-gs@philonline.com**

## GMA trying to be funny?

"SPS blamed for landslides."

Was the President trying to be funny? Or has he (as finally gotten to her? It is well known that illegal logging began during the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos. It was the payola so that the military's loyalty and perpetuate him in power. It is still the payola to keep some of the loans from misbehaving. Here is to also a man's repeating political havoc.

Blame it on the New Peoples Army? Why not blame it on Imelda Cuan and his elves? Logging crews too much work. Like many "law enforcers" the MPs prefer the easy way, the "people's issues," i.e., "forcing."

When adds insult to injury is the lack of respect the President has for the people's intelligence. Illegal logging has been one of the landfight only because of the unacceptable loss caused. It has been going on for almost one generation. How many more people must die before decisive action is taken?

**—ED LOPEZ,**
**Ciudad Grande,**
**Salitahan, Tagaytay City**

## GSIS probe of spurious loan has already begun

REGARDING the business news story, "Probity for accusation in GSIS loan)" (PDI, 11/28/'04), please be informed that GSIS president Winston Garcia has already ordered an investigation into the complaint of Br. Mercedes Rivera. Rest assured that the Government Service Insurance System will act accordingly once it verifies the alleged spurious housing loan made in due course without her knowledge and authority.

It is presently to prevent such anomalies that Garcia introduced reforms in the GSIS, including the full updating of the records of all GSIS members and coordinating agencies through real computerization. It is unfortunate that instead of being praised for the efforts, Garcia has been subjected to unfair criticisms and malicious attacks by individuals acting in their self interests.

Nevertheless, Garcia will continue to pursue the reforms in the GSIS to protect its members from being victimized by taipans and racketeers in or outside the GSIS. It appears that Rivera was victimized by four racketeers long before Garcia took over the helm of the GSIS in 2001. With the reforms he has introduced, this would no longer happen, especially since the members' list has been fully updated and purged of fake members. As a result, the number of loans fake GSIS members has been reduced from 2.7 million to 1.3 million.

The records of contributing agencies have also been updated: government agencies are now required to post their contributions for their employees' benefits in full, unlike before when many were remiss in their remittances, endangering the financial stability of the system.

Garcia is grateful to the media for bringing to his attention cases involving GSIS members such as Rivera' problems.

**—ELLA C. VALENCIENA,**
**vice president,**
**Public Affairs Office,**
**Government Service Insurance System,**
**Financial Center, Pasay City**

cartimar
It's never too early...
...for Christmas to be Merry.

Across the NATION

# Higher toll at Nlex put on hold for the holidays

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Motorists and commuters using the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) will enjoy a brief breather from paying higher toll during the Christmas holidays or until early January.

The good news came after officials of the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) confirmed in the Inquirer yesterday that it received a request from the NLEX developer, the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), but not to apply for a permit to be allowed to charge the new rates.

MNTC president Jose de Jesus, interviewed by the Inquirer on Friday, confirmed the delay in the implementation of the adjusted rates.

"Not yet," he said when asked if the MNTC was proceeding with its Dec. 15 schedule of charging new rates.

The MNTC, De Jesus said, has just applied for a certificate of substantial completion. Its approval will be the basis in work for the new TRB-set rates.

### New schedule

The process may take a while but De Jesus said he expected the MNTC to start collecting the new toll by late December or early January.

De Jesus said his company would base the adjustments on the formula approved in the project's Supplemental Concession Agreement (Sca) with the government, the NLEX operator Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) and the MNTC.

The base toll rates were based on construction cost and pre-operating costs, operations and maintenance costs, agreed traffic assumption, adjustment factors (inflation, foreign exchange rates) and return on investments).

Rehabilitation works in some portions of the new highway had delayed the MNTC's application for a completion certificate.

"The contractor (Leighton) assures the tranks to be within its standards," De Jesus said, adding that the same seen on Leighton's opinion.

TRB officials said the project, worth P14.3 billion, was 95 percent done.

The public, however, should brace for additional toll increases. The difference, De Jesus said, would be "a few centavos higher" than previously announced rates.

The opening toll of the 84-km. modern highway was initially set at P2.49 per km for cars, P6.22 for buses and light trucks, and P7.47 for heavy vehicles.

### Other side

The business sector in Pampanga sought staggered increases to be able to absorb them while militant groups pressed for lower rates.

Also in Thursday's hearing, Batangas Board Member Teofilo Guico Jr. (Lipa) questioned why the PNCC had allowed the MNTC to take over the SLEX when its franchise was ending in 2007.

Julius Cespes, TRB consultant, did not comment on the takeover but said the contract provisions will be brought to Congress.

Bello said the PNCC got the franchise to operate the SLEX starting in the 1970s through presidential decrees 1112 and 1113 issued by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

"Only Congress (has) the change the terms of the franchise contract," he said. Reports by Jess Diaz, INR Central Luzon Bureau

# Suspected illegally-cut logs seized in Cebu, Cavite towns

AUTHORITIES appear to have stepped up the hunt for illegally cut logs following the disaster in Quezon and Aurora provinces that left hundreds dead in landslides and logging.

Police, environment and local officials announced that they had stopped the transportation of logs, loaded in 16 trucks in separate operations—one in two towns in Cebu and another in a town in Cavite.

In Cebu, officials said they stopped 12 trucks from transporting what they suspect was illegal lumber in the towns of Alcoy and Dalaguete, southern Cebu province.

In the Alcoy operation, officials said seven trucks were stopped in Benzuyat Bay on about 9:30 km south of Cebu City. The village is a coastal area.

The following day, police and local officials stopped five trucks loaded with timber in Dumlubon, near, 126 km north of Cebu City.

Alcoy Mayor Antonio Pinedo said a forester of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) went to the office and reported the alleged illegal cutting of trees inside a 1,000-hectare timberland in Benzuyat. Bing on, about 15 km from the town proper.

He said he and some police officers went to the area and found seven trucks loaded with assorted lumber—mahogany, gmelina and lumpingan—measuring 563 board feet.

Pinedo ordered the police to seize all the items and bring them to the municipal hall.

PO3 Edwin Miranda of the Alcoy police said on Wednesday three personnel from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) in the town by name of Angue tried to claim the seized timber and lumber.

Miranda said the Cenro-Angue personnel presented a sanitation cutting permit signed by DENR Central Visayas executive regional director Elsevier Bagnalad and issued to the Margarita Mining and Development Corp.

The police refused to release the lumber and timber upon the mayor's instructions.

The sanitation cutting permit requires registration by a DENR forester.

Pinedo said he wanted to make sure the lumber from where the timber was cut were inside the area covered by the integrated forest management agreement. Efforts to reach officials of the Cenro-Alcoy office in the town by noon of August tried to claim the seized timber and lumber.

In Cavite, police stopped four 10-wheel trucks with about 5,000 cubic meters of mature logs at a checkpoint in Barangay Inchican in Tanza town on Wednesday.

Senior Insp. Jaime Rosales, Cavite police chief, said members of the police mobile unit stopped the trucks just in front of the Tanza municipal hall.

He quoted the drivers of the trucks as saying the 24 round logs were imported from the Solomon Islands. Rogen Rem Gutiano and were covered with permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Rosales said the logs were owned by Adrienne Global Transportation Systems.

He said police impounded the logs but were turned over to the community environment officer of Trece Martires City upon instruction from Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

"They said they inspect the logs to check if it were really imported," he told the Inquirer.

Rosales quoted the drivers as saying the logs were loaded at a port in Roxas, Batangas and was for delivery to the Export Processing Zone in Rosario, Cavite.

He said the logs were consigned to Wahong PTE Ltd.—Ltd., which intended to use the log for veneer and wood products for house. He said the company exports the products to Japan.

Although there is no known illegal logging operations in the province, Rosales said police have stepped up operations against small-scale logging in Cavite.

He said they seized 300 board feet of narra wood abandoned in a forested area in Barangay Tulo-ngasaw in Mangagoden town on Monday.

Chief Insp. Reynaldo Sinilla, Calabarzon police chief, ordered a detailed inspection of the Barangay past, where the logs were reportedly picked up.

In an earlier interview, Bonito Dogs, Don Montenegro, Barangay police chief, said he knew logs were regularly being delivered to several parts in the province but there were no logs.

He said since January, police have arrested 35 people who were caught transporting illegally cut logs mostly coming from the Mindoro Islands.

He said some 10,000 board feet of lumber and wood were seized.

"Most of the illegal logs were brought here by small cargo boats from Mindoro," he said.

He said most of the imported logs that police confiscated came from Malaysia and Indonesia. Reports Magnificent, PIU Visayas Bureau and Marlon Ramos, PIU Southern Luzon Bureau

GEN. RAMON Revilla Jr. gets a personal look at the disaster that struck Real town in Quezon as he aids a DENR rescuer Jun Cimon as (second from left) who was injured when a boulder falling from the mountainside struck him. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

# Funds for reforestation untapped in Negros

By Romy E. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Not one of the 21 cities and municipalities in Negros Oriental has availed themselves of funding offered by the provincial government for reforestation.

Gov. George Arnaiz, who made the offer early this year, said his office has committed some P12.5 million for reforestation projects for all the cities and towns in the province.

Although some were "interested," no local government unit (LGU) has so far formally taken the offer.

Each LGU that will implement the project gets P500,000 for seedling but it must put up a 50 percent counterpart fund or P250,000.

The governor reiterated his offer and said that if the LGUs do not have money to put up the counterpart fund, they can use the private sector for help.

"The governor wants the project to also provide livelihood to people living in the mountains, so they will be hired in the replanting of trees.

He also said a major component of the project is agroforestry, which includes the planting of such crops and fruit trees that can be harvested in a short period of time.

Arnaiz stressed that the Bankilhook that killed four dozen of people in Luzon must serve as a lesson on the need to protect and preserve the environment.

Adele Bonoc-Ledesma-Arnaiz, he said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should prosecute suspected illegal loggers, including the "kalaguiness (absentee) hunt farmers."

"I told the DENR people in the same spirit anybody who does smuggle embedding harmful laws," he said.

Charlie Bibit, community environment and natural resources officer (Cenro), said his office has been filing cases against those involved in the illegal logging activities.

But Bibit, a veteran forester, said the duty of Cenro officers, even if they result in convictions, is not the only way to stop illegal logging.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# Dad-wanna-be Woods shares Target lead

THOUSAND OAKS, California—Steve Stricker isn't married, Tiger Woods says it won't be long before he starts a family.

"I don't want to be an old father," Woods said on Thursday. "I still want to be young. We're not going to wait too long."

Woods, who turns 29 at the end of the month, married Swedish nanny Elin Nordegren on Oct. 5 in Barbados after they dated for about two years. Nordegren will be 25 on Jan. 1.

Woods did not say when they planned to have children, but that he wanted more than one.

"For me, it will be bigger than it will be for (Stricker who's had siblings," Woods said. "We know six only child. When we have, hopefully, more than one, then it will be really different because I've never dealt with that."

Woods said he would introduce his children to golf, but not push them into the sport.

"I'm not going to force it on them," he said. "If they want to play, I'll be there to help them out. But I'm not going to force it on them. I think it's a lot more fun if they want to do it on their own."

Woods, who earned $5.7 million in 2004 and won five times on the PGA Tour, is trying to become the first player to win the Target World Challenge 3 times.

Colin Montgomerie hit a 5-wood into about 6 feet for eagle on the 18th hole, getting him a 4-under 67 and a share of the lead Woods and Jim Furyk.

"I played quite well," Montgomerie said. "Perhaps not as well as Tiger Woods, well, that's OK."

Woods and Furyk didn't do anything quite as dramatic. They just kept out of trouble and recorded the kind of matches that knocked Chris DiMarco out of the tour's money title race Thursday in a 5-over 77, handing the worst round on a par-72 course at Sherwood Country Club.

Woods overcame a sluggish start with a 3-iron out of the dining tough and under a tree that came within inches of going into the hole at No. 4. That left him a tap-in birdie.

Furyk was among three players who had the outright lead on the back nine until Woods earned the 18th green, chipped to 12 feet and watched his par putt turn away just as the rain.

All of them have something to play for in Hawaii next year and tournament until 31 of the best players in golf.

Woods failed to win a stroke-play event on the PGA Tour for the first time in three years, but he won No. 1 nothing to Singh, last month and his swing changes were coming together. He won in Japan last month, and says the improvements to an other building block for next year.

Furyk had surgery on his left wrist in March, missed the first half of the season and failed to win on the PGA Tour for the first time since 1997.

And then there's Monty.

He has tumbled to No. 79 in the world ranking—one spot behind Bing Bum-star of South Korea—it could become of every golf-le dreamer knocks with this summer. AP

WOODS: I don't want to be an old father

# Lewis lifts Sonics past Mavs

RAY Allen of the Seattle Supersonics jumps to the hoop against forward Dirk Nowitzki of the Dallas Mavericks. AP

## *Houston, Boston win thrillers*

DALLAS—Rashard Lewis erased a fourth-quarter deficit then protected Seattle's lead with a high-flying baseline dunk, a 3-pointer as the shot clock expired and two free throws with 16.5 seconds to go in the Supersonics's 107-102 victory Thursday over the Dallas Mavericks.

"Rashard is playing like a man possessed," said teammate Ray Allen, who followed his 26 against the Spurs with 22. "He's on a mission. He's gonna a guy who's willing to stand back and watch, but he's also stepping up and is one of the guys at the forefront."

One night after becoming the first team this season to win at San Antonio, Seattle won its fourth straight game and ninth in 10 games to reclaim the NBA's best record at 17-3.

Lewis had set his career high three this season, matching last year's total in just 12 games. More troubling for the Mavericks is that all the losses have come against winning teams.

"We really fought to get back into the game and take the lead, but it just seemed like they had the big shot after big shot," Mavs coach Don Nelson said.

Vladimir Radmanovic had 16 points for Seattle, including 5 of 7 on 3-pointers.

Dirk Nowitzki led the Mavericks with 27 points.

In Houston, Tracy McGrady snapped up a loose ball and hit a running 3-pointer with 1.7 seconds left to help Houston complete a rally from a 16-point deficit in the final minutes and beat San Antonio, 81-80.

McGrady scored 12 points in the final 2:8 seconds, including three difficult 3-pointers, to finish with 30 points, eight rebounds and five assists as the biggest last-minute comeback for Houston.

The Rockets have won three straight for the first time this season, and snapped an eight-game losing streak against their 1-18 rivals. The Spurs lost three second nonsingle, a night after a tough defeat against Seattle in San Antonio.

Tim Duncan had 27 points and 16 rebounds for the Spurs.

In Portland, Oregon, Shareef Abdur-Rahim hit a buzzer-beating 3-pointer as Portland defeated Boston, 90-88.

Rahim led all with 20 2 seconds left, but Zach Randolph made two free throws to make it a one-point game. After letting time run down, the Celtics' Gary Payton tried to get the ball to Paul Pierce, but the shot clock expired and left Pierce with one final chance to win.

Abdur-Rahim caught an outlet pass from Derek Anderson, set up him 25-foot and drilled the winning shot. He was then mobbed by his teammates, who celebrated a hard-fought victory.

Abdur-Rahim finished with 15 points and 14 rebounds, and Randolph had 22 points and 12 rebounds for the Blazers, who ended a two-game losing streak.

Pierce and Mark Blount had 14 points each for Boston, which has been straight on its West Coast road trip. Leading scorer Pierce, suffering from the symptoms, played but was ineffective, finishing with six points. AP

# UAAP team clinches 4th gold in Indonesia

TEAM Unit-Philippines clinched a fourth gold medal courtesy of the men's 4x100-meter relay team Thursday to become the second winningest squad in swimming of the 12th ASEAN University Games in Surabaya, Indonesia.

The four golds also surpassed the three won by another Team UAAP in the biennial event's 11th edition the country hosted in 2002.

The team of Athens Olympian Teresa Dyse, Ross Grabador and Jeffrey Lagrimas all of UP and Benjamin Lloyd of CSB clocked 4:04.05.75 to beat Thailand (4:04.87) for the gold medal.

The country only sent a swimming team to the competition and the swimmers, supported by friends, also grabbed six silvers and three bronzes to end with Thailand (9-5-1), Indonesia (3-3-9) was third, followed by Singapore (1-0-1). Vietnam and Brunei have yet to bag a medal.

Grabador and Lorna Bracewell, also of UP, clinched the country's first two gold medals Wednesday.

Dyseinny, with Petrina Amago (3:09), Nicole Santiago (Ateneo) and another UP tanker, sparked the women's 4x100 medley relay team to the gold in 4:44.71 on the first of the competitions. It was the third gold for the RP team headed by Jose Capozzoso Jr. of Ateneo.

# Klitschko defends title; Tyson faces prison term

LAS VEGAS—Vitali Klitschko's dream was always to fight Mike Tyson. For now, he'll have to settle for fighting the man who has beat Tyson.

Klitschko defends his WBC heavyweight title Saturday against Danny Williams, who made a name for himself in July when he stopped Tyson in the fourth round in one of the biggest boxing upsets of recent times.

"Danny Williams destroyed my dream of fighting Mike Tyson," Klitschko said. "Now I will destroy his dream of becoming world heavyweight champion."

Meanwhile, Tyson could face 1 1/4 years behind bars after being cited by police on suspicion of felony criminal damage in a nightclub incident, the Sonoma Republic reported.

A bar patron is accused Scottsdale around Tyson of leaping on to his car and pounding his fists on the hood of the vehicle outside the Pussycat Lounge on November 27.

The newspaper reported that Saul Alkazin, a 22-year-old Arizona immigrant, stopped to allow people to walk in front of his white Toyota and Tyson leaped on the hood while screaming.

A Municipal Court hearing was scheduled for December 17. Because of his troubled history, Tyson could face nearly six years behind bars if convicted.

Williams was nowhere on the heavyweight radar when Klitschko won the title vacated by the retirement of Lennox Lewis against Corrie Sanders in April.

Thinking he would be an easy opponent for the larger Tyson, somebody Williams was picked to fight Tyson in Louisville on July 30. Williams spent a lot of time by watching a five-round barrage from Tyson and stopping him three rounds later.

Klitschko wasn't happy about losing a possible big fight with Tyson.

"I was so upset that I couldn't believe my eyes that it was happening," Klitschko said. "I was surprised how good Danny Williams was."

Heavyweight title fights are usually big fights, but this one is the biggest yet. In boxing's top four, which are WBC, WBA, IBF and WBO, Klitschko (45 pounds; 121.5 kilograms) and Klitschko (250 pounds; 112.5 kilograms) combined to break a record for the heaviest heavyweight title fight ever. AP

## Tale of the Tape

| PACQUIAO 25 | | FAHSAN 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Record: 38 wins, 3 losses, 2 draws | | Record: 44 wins, 7 losses, 1 draw |
| Height: 5'3½ in. | | Height: 5'6½ in. |
| Weight: 126 lbs. | | Weight: 5-5 |
| Reach: 64 1/2" | | Reach: 67" |
| Neck: 14 1/2" | | Neck: 14 1/2" |
| Chest (Normal): 34" | | Chest (Normal): 38 1/2" |
| Chest (Expanded): 38 1/2" | | Chest (Expanded): 42" |
| Biceps: 13" | | Biceps: 15" |
| Forearm: 11" | | Forearm: 11 1/2" |
| Wrist: 6 1/2" | | Wrist: 7" |
| Thigh: 23" | | Thigh: 27 1/2" |

# A character of its own

SPECTATOR

*Al S. Mendoza*

All I see in this, it would seem Mike Golf was not only on its way to a smashing debut in the PBA-Asia Golf International in Baguio City. With its baptism of fire on Thursday, with expensive participants, the tournament evolved headed to a Cinderella victory in the final event now set on 11th year.

Suddenly all the opposition can do is shake their heads and pray that Mike Golf does not make tournament of its host in the remaining rounds of the tournament.

My story, look what it has done to Day One alone: a 14-point margin over three-time champion Southwoods in the pre-mier PBA Championship Division; and a 13-point edge, also over Southwoods, in the Am Championship Division.

What's this, a replica of any Ghibli putting line unbelievable one-sided victory new PBI in Cebu in the last presidential polls that clinched for her a six-year stay in the Palace?

Looks like it, if you ask me.

If and when Mike Golf is crowned champion in both the PB and Am Championship Divisions tomorrow, Sunday, the biggest credit goes to Tomiko Maestre. Tommy now the PB Asia's prodigal son for having snapped out of his way to the PBA scene to triumph in the tournament, has re-assembled two teams equipped with the sock and wallop of the last three killer typhoons combined.

A 32 at Camp John Hay by Abe Sanz on Thursday was not even good enough and had to be shrunk out of Mike Golf's output in the PB Championship in five of the 20s of Jay Bayron and Jun Bayan. Je by Jessie Bagasbas and 20 by Boy Sotiangco Jr. in the five-to-play four-ball format.

And close over at Baguio Country Club that same day, Member-Marquee's 36-hol net count for Mike Golf in the Am Championship were as Blanchers's sure father, Tommy, blasted the field with a 26 (even par). That's runs by JC Tiongco Jr., Dave Hernandez and Ronnie Torres proved to be signs of things to come. A seemingly formidable rest of the opposition.

Only a miracle can save Mizuno Golf, down by 19 points after Round One, from losing its PB Championship crown.

Indeed, almost every PB-ner Golf lens tational event has a character of its own. Every year is a new happening. This Mizuno edition is no exception.

***

How can Manny Pacquiao not win tonight?

He is one only fighting on home ground, a built-in advantage for any homegrown boxer up against an invader in the dense infested world of boxing.

The country's boxing darling is also fighting someone with a name not worth remembering on this, maybe, with a single Pacquiao punch, the pretender from Thailand would become unremembered. God forbid, not to say hospitalized.

Pretenders have only been talking about Pakisan DK Barrera in having beaten more than 20 Filipino boxers. Gosh, isn't that a lot? Sure for Pacquiao, have we really been graduating pointers in the ring all these years?

If you think Pahsan can pull off a miracle tonight, I suspect you also supported Brother Eddie to win the presidency last May.

The result I can tell you, fellas Pacquiao's No. 1 worry since the referee signals the start of the fight is how not to knock Pahsan out in the first round. Don't know if the world-renowned Freddie Roach, the only trainer that Pacquiao listens to, has a formula for that.

Yes, if Roach has more mid Pacquiao knocks out Pahsan just seconds into the first round, the ring side can be guilty of pasting television promoters out of business, if not disappointing fight fanfs who usually love to see more guts than a fight ring can fit within.

That reminds maybe? Or three?

Well, it will all really depend on what round Pacquiao would be in when he climbs the ring tonight. If he has a bit-batch dan after the fight, then one TV signings have a monumental problem to choose from. Tyson could be in for a big drug-punishment in the form of an early Pacquiao assist by KO.

I can only pray that before Pahsan answers the first bell, he has signed an insurance.

***

BATIBUKA: Cheers to Dr. Christian Bautista and Beth Cella, who will launch their book on the nation's basketball legends today at the SLU Convocation-ium Center, Ateneo Compound, QC. Interestingly, Dr. Bautista is a first cousin of lawyer Hans Sgrosoli, the amiable president of the Baguio Country Club.

INQUIRER Visayas

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
News Chief Gabrijel L. Bernales

**SYMPATHY** A protester declares sympathy for slain broadcaster Hinolan in Bansa City, Libmanan, away from Naga City where the commentator was killed and buried on Nov. 27. (Photo courtesy of Bicol Today)

# Goodbye, 'Bombo Boy'

By Hector P. Burgos Jr.
Naga City

"GOODBYE, Boy. You have left us forever," an old woman cried as she hugged the casket of slain broadcaster Herson Hinolan.

A few meters away, Hinolan's widow Agha-ahn said their 20-year-old son Kim sought solace in each other's arms as the casket was lowered into the grave.

Hinolan's burial on Nov. 27 was witnessed by around 3,000 mourners calling for justice and condemning his murder. They were driven to tears during the eulogical service earlier when a recording of one of his programs was aired for the last time, his booming voice echoing inside the Mary Immaculate Metropolitan Cathedral.

Many more people lined up the streets of Bansa City, capital of Capiz, as the Mitsubishi-type hearse headed for the Divine Infant Memorial Park in Barangay Bonbon. At the cemetery, the mourners lined up for a last glimpse of his remains.

His burial was a fitting sendoff to one of the few broadcasters who rose from the ranks after covering four presidents in Western Visayas.

Hinolan started as a reporter of Bombo Radyo in Bacolod City covering the military beat in 1986 at the height of the government's counter-insurgency campaign in Negros Island. He practically encamped in the headquarters of the Army's Negros Island Command, and Joel Demontis, Bombo Radyo Network's Visayas-area manager for Mindanao.

He was assigned to Bombo Radyo-Roxas in 1992 as head of the "Bombobanay sa Bilis" and later became the station's assistant manager. It was during his stint in Roxas that he met and fell in love with Aghaedee Viaje.

Hinolan's feisty style in his program drew libel suits and threats. He took all these in stride but took no chances and packed an M-16 rifle, said Demontis.

In 1998, he is transferred to Iloilo City as station manager of the Radyo Mindanao Network station.

**'My go-to guy'**

He went back to Bombo Radyo a year after and became the station manager of DYR Bombo Radyo Iloilo where he hosted the morning program "Bombobanay Bigtime."

Demontis described Hinolan as a "fighter" and "good soldier" who never refused even the most challenging assignments. "He was my go-to guy. Every time management is given to him, I can be assured that it is good as accomplished."

Police said it was probably Hinolan's hard-hitting ("ngasi sa tino") commentaries that earned the ire of groups or individuals who wanted him silenced.

On Nov. 23, a lone gunman reportedly shot the 56-year-old broadcaster outside a carinderia in Kalibo. He died two days later from serious injuries that damaged his stomach and liver.

The gunman apparently made sure it's lights was dead. He shot him at least five times and pursued him until the wounded broadcaster fell on the road.

Hinolan's mother Irenia called on the police and other law enforcement agencies to hasten the investigation of the murder and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

She urged the public to help solve the murder of other journalists whose cases had remained unsolved. "Help in whatever you can or these killings will continue," she said.

Kilos tagged Mayor Fred Asistio of Lezo, Aklan, as the gunman. Asistio, a retired soldier, has denied involvement in the crime.

At least one other suspect remains at large.

The case against Asistio is undergoing preliminary investigation in the provincial prosecutor's office.

Hinolan was the 18th journalist killed in the country this year and the 19th since 1986 when democracy was restored.

Journalists in Davao, who have been actively condemning previous killings of journalists from other regions, found themselves mourning and calling for justice for one of their own.

**Unprecedented unity**

Hinolan's death brought an unprecedented sense of unity to the often-fractious media community in Iloilo, according to veteran journalists.

Setting aside professional differences, around 200 journalists joined Hinolan's funeral cortege from Barotac town in Iloilo province, including some taken from Miagao to his hometown in Talisay City in Negros Occidental.

"He is not a competitor anymore. He is (a) brother in the profession, a fallen comrade," said John Paul Tan, station manager of Bombo Radyo's rival Aksyon Radyo Iloilo.

Many other journalists, led by the Iloilo chapter of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), wore black shirts emblazoned with "Stop Killing Journalists!" and black armbands.

Where vehicles joined the convoy but took off around 1 p.m. in the Barotac public plaza. The number had doubled when it arrived in Iloilo City an hour later.

People who waited for hours in Zaragoza threw flowers as the funeral car as it reached the plaza. They approached Hinolan's family, who were in a van, to offer condolences.

Some people held lighted candles and placards with handwritten messages calling for justice for the slain journalists and urging media practitioners to carry on with their work.

Radio stations airing the news live received phone calls and text messages from listeners offering sympathy and lauding the work of journalists.

At Barangay Lapuz in La Paz District, where Hinolan's remains were embarked from a rolling, roll-off (Ilono) vault, militant groups led by the flagging, strumming Makabayan band, plus vehicles calling for justice for all slain journalists.

Media organizations have called on lawmakers and the government to show proof that they were not lax in solving the cases and prosecuting Hinolan cases. "Solve the cases or else suffer the people's wrath," said Demontis during a necrological service in Iloilo City.

"There's (three) ways: sending in a message of fear. We have only two options. To be afraid or to go on with the fight," said Sia.

Tan said Hinolan's murder left a reminder to his colleagues. "We realize that we are loved by the people and in our units, we can confront the most difficult challenges, even death."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
the NATION
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2004

# 8 cultists plead not guilty to gun charges

LAPULAPU CITY, Cebu—Eight cult members pleaded innocent of charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives yesterday, days after they were arrested carrying unlicensed assault rifles and grenades.

Eight members of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) headed by Ruben Ecleo Jr. were arraigned on the charges at the Municipal Trial Court in Cities here.

They also asked the court to reduce the recommended bail bond of P360,000 for each by at least half, saying they could not afford to pay the amount.

The eight were Nestor Carrol, M/Sgt. Heracleo Rallestan, Michael Baylon, Richard Caballero, Arjulyn Gallardo, Rosalito Osper, Damiano and Elpidio Amarila.

They were on board a van when arrested in the evening of Dec. 3 at a police checkpoint in Sitio Busya, Barangay Mactan this city.

Seized from them were .32 cal. revolver, .45 cal. pistols, three baby Armalites with a silencer, six rifle grenades, two grenades and 1,000 bullets.

The Lapulapu City prosecutor recommended bail of P360,000 for each of the accused or P60,000 for low caliber firearms; P100,000 for the explosives and P200,000 for the high-powered firearms.

MTCC Judge Ester Veloso gave the public prosecutor three days to comment on the motion to reduce bail filed by the accused before she rules on it.

After the accused entered their plea of not guilty, the judge deferred the pre-trial conference of the case after their lawyer Linda Susan Baring told the court that she was withdrawing as their counsel.

The judge said she would not allow Baring to withdraw from the case until the accused could get another lawyer to defend them.

Baring later told the INQUIRER that the eight hired her just to appeal for a reduction of bail and to represent them during the arraignment.

"It's the constitutional right of the accused to ask for a reduction of bail. As to my withdrawal, I only represented them in their request to reduce the bail bond recommended and for their arraignment. I still do not know who would replace me," she said.

***Jolene Bulambot, PDI Visayas Bureau***

# 3 Cavite cops slain in ambush

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Three members of a special unit of the Cavite police were killed in an ambush in a village in Silang Cavite Thursday.

The slain policemen were identified as Rollan del Mundo, Teodorico Dino and George Suarez, all police officers 1 and members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team of the Dasmariñas police station.

Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police chief, said a man identifying himself as Jude Rivera called up the police station at around noon to inform police about the supposed discovery of bombs in Silang.

He said the town police chief instructed the victims to check the veracity of the report and sent Del Mundo, Dino and Suarez because they were experts in handling explosives.

About two hours after, at around 2 p.m., the local police of Silang received a call from the barangay councilor of Sitio Ilang Ilang relaying information that the policemen were gunned down in the area by unidentified armed men.

Rosales said they have yet to determine whether the communist New People's Army (NPA) was behind the killings.

"There were no reported sightings of NPAs in the area. The NPAs are considered weak here and have no known base in Cavite. But it (the ambush) was well-planned," he told the INQUIRER.

He said another sign that makes him doubt that the NPA was behind the ambush was the failure of the attackers to take the policemen's service firearms, a usual practice of communist rebels which they call "agaw armas."

He said police were able to recover all of the victims' guns except for a hand pistol and an M-16 rifle.

Rosales said they are looking into personal vendetta as a possible motive for the killings.

"The three might have gotten the ire of some unscrupulous individuals while they were performing their duties as policemen," he said.

He said he already instructed his men to take all emergency calls with caution and always monitor all mobile units assigned to areas in the province where ambushes could be planned.

***Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

# 'Sagip Buhay' donations turned over

THE PHILIPPINE Daily Inquirer's 15th anniversary celebration on Thursday took a meaningful turn as the donations received by the newspaper's "Operation Sagip Buhay" were turned over by Fr. Francis Lucas of the Prelature of Infanta and Mr. Sammy Ingilles of the Institute for Disaster Risk Management after the anniversary Mass.

Less than a week after the appeal was launched, the newspaper turned over a total of P686,700 to Fr. Lucas and Mr. Ingilles given by individual and corporate donors. Among the corporate donors were Sen. Miguel Zubiri, Arrow Freight, Asia Brewery and PLDT. This is aside from the donations in kind which had been received by the paper and donations received through "Operation Sagip Buhay" partner-organizations. Its points Board Chair Mr. Hector Pryce, PSE President Randy Ambolodto, Publisher Inquirer Number, Incorporated Multi-Purpose Cooperative Chair Joel Rigos and UEP President Fidel Tan were on hand to personally give the donations.

In his response, Fr. Lucas narrated the different stories of the victims and acknowledged the support of the people who had given their time and resources, aside from this paper, other partner-organizations of "Operation Sagip Buhay" are Ayala Development Foundation, Ayala Foundation, Institute for Disaster Risk Management, Hands On Manila, United Laboratories, Catholic Media Network, Corporate Network for Disaster Response, Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the National Disaster Coordinating Council. As the relief program is moving to the rehabilitation phase, the group is still continuing to appeal for donations for the typhoon victims.

THE HOMELESS begin their search for a roof over their heads in Tigaon, Real, Quezon. This father and daughter walk their way toward the next town in search of relief.

# Water shortage looms

Turn to page A2

adequate supplies for now and in the first quarter of 2005 because Angat Dam still had enough water following the heavy rains brought by the typhoons "Unding," "Violeta," "Winnie" and "Yoyong" in November and early this month.

"The problem will come later when the water has been used up," Honradez said.

Honradez said the report of the Ipo-Ipo facility would take some time, especially since it was inaccessible by land. He said the report would probably take less than a year but engineers from the MWSS would finish the job before it was too late.

### Weather a factor

Heavy equipment can only be brought in by airlift, by a special kind of chopper," Honradez said.

"We are also considering the weather. We can only bring in the equipment if the weather is clear and there are no clouds in the area," Honradez said.

Honradez said he had ordered the release of P30 million from MWSS funds to cover the costs of immediate repair of the facility.

Consultancy fees also have been lined to look into how the rehabilitation work could be finished in the soonest possible time, he said.

### Help from Malaysia

Appealing to the public to conserve water, Honradez pointed out that the situation was not an serious but required attention and the public's cooperation.

He said work to rehabilitate the Ipo-Ipo facility might not start immediately because searchers in the Greater Manila area tended to deteriorate during December.

"We may have to wait until the weather clears up," Honradez said.

He also said that the MWSS would rent additional helicopters, probably from Malaysia, to airlift the necessary equipment for the repair of the tunnel.

### IN THE KNOW

By PDI Research

THE MWSS-AMAUT tunnel diverts water from Ipo-Ipo River in Bulacan toward Ipo-Ipo Reservoir in Rodriguez, Rizal, and then to the Angat Hydroelectric Power Plant, before it flows into the Angat Reservoir in Bulacan, the major source of Metro Manila's water supply.

The tunnel is 15.1 km long and has a diameter of 4.3 meters. It is a major component of the Angat Hydroelectric Power Project, funded with loans from the Asian Development Bank.

The tunnel is considered an engineering marvel as it was built through the otherwise impenetrable Sierra Madre mountains and excavated through a very wide range of rock conditions.

The astounding engineering work cost P3 billion and took six years to complete.

Before the tunnel was built, the Ipo-Ipo River flowed south, discharging into the Pacific Ocean.

The Ipo-Ipo basin has a marked rainy season during October to February and a high flow period from June to February. The catchment of Angat River has its wet season from June to October.

The complementary spillway portion of the Ipo-Ipo diversion dam has been completed to increase storage and water release facility.

Until the recent typhoons, the Umiray tunnel was supplying Angat Dam with as much as 4 cubic meters per second of water, benefiting about 2.2 million people in Metro Manila. This means 25 to 30 percent added to the water supply for Metro Manila.

Its beneficiaries have been the residents in the service areas of the Manila Water Inc., the Ayala Corp.-led East Zone concessionaire which covers 23 cities and municipalities.

These include Mandaluyong, Marikina, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Makati, parts of Quezon City and Manila as well as the towns of Angono, Antipolo, Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Carmona, Cardona, Jala-Jala, Morong, Pililla, Rodriguez, Tanay, Taytay, Teresa, Rodriguez and San Mateo in the province of Rizal.

# Miner's nightmare led to miracle rescue in Real

Turn to page A2

small space, about two feet high, where she, her grandmother Alma Tamares and nephew spent 38 days fighting for their lives.

### 'It was her'

The minute Balinggay saw the child's eyes open, he knew it was her.

"I couldn't believe what I saw," he told the reporters as he continued to strike at the concrete with his sledgehammer. "I could feel my bones chill. Emmanuel also jumped. He cried hushed like the girl in the movie 'The Ring' where the elderly woman sees her grandmother.

"It was more than a miracle."

The hole was one of four areas that the miners drilled to locate survivors.

Balinggay said he was so taken by the sight of the girl emerging from the hole that he didn't notice his team were telling about his deeds.

"I laughed at myself. I thought it was only sweat," he recalled, smiling.

### No rookie

He said he was also moved by the charming of the residents who had been searching for the bodies of their loved ones to be retrieved.

Balinggay, a father of nine, is no rookie in rescue work. He has worked in other disaster-stricken places like Tigaon, and mining had been his family's source of income for more than 20 years.

He said he was part of all the rescue team also sent by Philex that rescued Jessa Rica, wife of Baguio City Mayor and presidential aspirant Bud Bava, from the rubble of the Ulam Resthouse fatality.

But the rescue operation in Real is harder compared to the one they had after an earthquake hit Baguio in 1990.

"Digging through the flesh and bones is different than drilling through concrete. This is not energy-consuming."

Aside from a regular salary of P350 a day, they don't receive any monetary compensation for the operations, Balinggay said.

### Ready to give their all

Digmicel Joel Son, team leader of the Philex group, said officers of the Philippine Mine Safety Environment Association, led by Philex Rolandito of Baguio Gangay, initiated the rescue-saving request. saved miners to help in the search and rescue operations in the area.

Son said his team, composed of 18 miners, flew over on Saturday to assess the area and the information based on the information they had.

Their group, together with 14 other miners from Benguet Corp., arrived on Monday noon.

Another group, composed of 20 miners from Lepanto Corp., followed the next day.

Son said his group were eager to join the rescue operation because they were sure that people could still survive under the rubble.

"This is a heavy mission. Everyone of us knows that so many lives depend on us. We are ready to give our all," he said.

Son said they initially had a hard time finding their way to the concrete planks, which was once part of the basement and ground floor of the Brgador building, because the ground was covered with mud.

Although these backhoe trucks were sent by the Department of Public Works and Highways, he and they had no other equipment aside from shovels, sledgehammers, solid bars and pinch bars, which they used in digging the area manually.

"We have no machines aside from our tools. The Army have airlifted the necessary fuel and oxygen tanks here. That made our operation faster," he said.

### Veteran rescuer

Vicente Encinales, head of the Benguet Corp. team, had actually retired from work until he got a call from his former bosses who asked him to head their group.

He said his work in the Baguio was his fourth.

Encinales, 56, said he was with a team of miners who had drilled and saved survivors from the tragedy that struck Baguio in his City, Zambales, in 1990 and from the Ormoc Gallego in Camarines Sur in 1998.

He was also part of the team sent to rescue survivors in the massive flash flood that claimed the lives of thousands of residents in Leyte in December last year.

### No let-up

Col. Jaime Estevanillo, chief of the 202nd Infantry Brigade, said search-and-rescue operations would continue until they were sure that all possible survivors were safe and all the missing had been recovered for.

He said they had requested more equipment to hasten their operations, such as acetylene tanks and machine cutters.

"We want to ensure that the victims will not die just because we failed to reach them in time for them to be recovered," Estevanillo said.

That's why we are asking for more help from companies who can provide us the necessary tools," he said.

Estevanillo said he and the miners were working more than 12 hours a day to find more survivors.

# 13.6M affected by 4 typhoons

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Unknown victims

The clothes—about 13,000 bales of them—will actually come from the stockpile of smuggled goods confiscated by the BOC, Soliman said in a press conference.

Damaged homes total 40,715, of which 13,529 were destroyed beyond simple repairs, Soliman said.

### No donor fatigue?

The grim statistics continued to draw a touching response from Good Samaritans—both relief donors and relief workers—Soliman said, more far from showing "fatigue."

But he admitted that there were already signs of "sparing off" in the amount of donations of the DSWD's main drop-off centers in Metro Manila, or Warehouse 14 in Compo Aguinaldo.

The warehouse is also used by Operation Sagip Buhay, a media-initiated one, since last Tuesday.

Soliman noted that since the warehouse began receiving donations after "Winnie," the incoming goods were worth between P1 million and P1.2 million in a daily basis.

"But yesterday, it was down to P800,000," she said.

### Money in bank

Apparently to dispel doubts about the government's ability to disburse relief efforts, Soliman said the National Disaster Coordinating Council still had "cash in bank" amounting to P44 million in foreign-donations alone, ready to be used to purchase relief goods.

On top of this amount, international pledges of "humanitarian aid" are now pegged at P356 million, she reported. This brings the government's "own" to funds courtesy of donors to P218 million.

The worth of donated relief goods that have been channeled through the DSWD and other government agencies has reached P66 million, of which P22.78 million has been transported to the disaster areas.

Goods generated by various private sector initiatives and officials were directly brought to the people (without passing through government) have reached P44.2 million, she added.

### Foreign donors

China yesterday granted another $200,000 (approximately P11 million) to aid for the typhoon victims.

"The Chinese government and people convey their message of sympathy to the Philippine government and to the victims of typhoons," said Ambassador Wu Hongbo.

China, which was among the first countries to respond to the country's appeal for help, earlier turned over a P2,000 million check to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Japan is also donating an additional ¥107,500 (approximately P38 million) to our country's coffers.

Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki said the fund would be used to procure food for the 76,000 families in central and southern Luzon.

The grant comes on top of the P15.5 million worth of relief goods that the Japanese government earlier released to the DSWD.

Lack of manpower and meddling by local politicians have caused delays in the relief and recovery operations in Quezon, according to a news flood report on the after effects of the four typhoons released by the NDCC.

### Meddling politicians

The NDCC report said manpower shortage and lack of transport equipment had slowed down the loading and unloading of relief goods in the Bicol and Southern Luzon areas.

The "intervention" of a former mayor of Real, who was not identified in the report, had also posed a "problem" in the distribution of relief goods to the isolated Barangays Mangumbuk, Tignoan, Talisay and Capalong, according to the NDCC.

### Communications gap?

The NDCC said a total of 341 persons were confirmed dead, 812 injured and 466 missing from the four typhoons.

But the NDCC noted that other "problems" were causing delays in the relief operations.

It said one problem was brought about by a lack of communications between personnel from the DSWD and the Department of Health.

"DSWD personnel are not properly informed by the DOH on the status of victims evacuated to hospitals. Therefore, summary and information could not be provided relatives of said victims," the NDCC report said.

Drawing from their pork barrel funds and savings from not holding Christmas parties, the Senate has, meanwhile, raised over P6 million as donation to the victims.

### Pork barrel funds

The amount included P5.05 million which senators took from their Priority Development Assistance Fund or PDAF to relief operations and resettlement programs in Surigao and Quezon.

With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

BUSINESS

Julie Raul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Navarro

# New 'sin' tax bill seen raising P15B more

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE SENATE is preparing a new "sin" taxes bill that will enhance Sen. Ralph Recto's version, criticized as a watered-down proposal of the government's original plan, and generate P15 billion in additional revenue a year for the cash-starved government.

According to Finance Undersecretary Juan Ponce Enrile, who represents the DOF in congressional hearings on the tax, the new Senate bill would incorporate proposals from several senators, including Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, whose own version of the sin tax bill was put in the back burner.

"The bill that the (Senate ways and means) committee is preparing will give an incremental revenue that is P5 billion more than what was requested to be generated from the proposal earlier approved by the committee," Enrile said in a press briefing.

The version earlier adopted by the committee expected an additional revenue of P10 billion a year through a 12-percent and 40-centavo increase in cigarette taxes, or similar to Recto's bill.

Enrile's version, which was passed with Recto's version, sought specific amounts of respective increases in taxes for each cigarette price bracket, until these reach a minimum P15.50 in specific tax in 2011.

Sen. declined to disclose the amendments in Recto's version of the bill that would result in an additional P5 billion in incremental revenues. But the finance official said the DOF's earlier proposed to regularly index the tax rates to inflation would not be included.

Amendments to Recto's bill will also come from Senators Panfilo Lacson, Loisa Madrigal, Manuel Roxas II and Richard Gordon.

The said Congress was expected to pass the sin taxes bill before the end of the year as promised by legislators.

The passage of the sin taxes bill is considered the most essential in getting the country out of its fiscal problems.

Meanwhile, Tan said the government was now expecting more than P130 billion in additional revenue from its fiscal reform agenda, mainly from the following: revenue-raising measures: increase in sin taxes, P75 billion; rationalization of fiscal incentives, P25 billion; 12-percent value-added tax, P59 billion; tax amnesty, P36 billion; lateral attrition, P36 billion; and simplified tax income tax, P28 billion.

The executive has dropped the plan to impose franchise tax on telecommunication companies as well as the 1% increase in excise tax on petroleum.

According to a ranking DOF official, the government could make do with the additional revenues to be generated from the plan to impose an across-the-board increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent.

With the higher VAT, which is one of the originally proposed revenue raising measures together with the franchise tax on

"When everything important to us is within reach, we know we've made the right decision."

Dr. Benjie Luna and daughter Ysobel
Ayala Westgrove Heights Homeowners

Growing up in the city, we simply got used to having everything within reach – schools, hospitals, shopping centers and public utilities. Everything is convenient and comfortable for you. That's why Benjie, a cardiologist, and his wife, Grace, a flight attendant, initially had doubts of leaving their first home. But in the end of 2003, they decided to escape the squeeze that has intensified in their 3-bedroom condominium in Pasig City. More importantly, factories in the area have greatly contributed to the worsening air pollution. "We were really thinking of our daughters," Grace said. "We want them to grow up in a cleaner, safer community."

They've always dreamed of living in a more natural environment. A place with plenty of trees, hills and wide open spaces where their children can freely roam around to play. But the thought of moving far from the familiar comforts of the city seemed impractical. Like many families, they have fallen into the "big city trap".

Then Benjie discovered Ayala Westgrove Heights through his daughter Ysobel's prep school principal. "He had just bought a lot and was so happy with his purchase," he said. Ayala Westgrove Heights, after all, is designed to be a self-contained community, similar to Ayala Alabang. All the necessary amenities are continuously being built around it: schools, hospitals, commercial centers, groceries, churches. Only 15 minutes away from Alabang, it is a sanctuary that does not isolate, but offers a chance to escape at the end of the day.

Inside, they are surrounded by lush mango groves and rolling hills. A cool climate is also perfect for outdoor family activities. Amenities like the garden, clubhouse and children's playground are enough to keep them home for entire weekends. "My daughters used to miss our old place in the city. But that's not the case now. They love everything here... waking up to beautiful views, playing with birds and crickets, and picking mangoes in our backyard," Grace said.

The most important thing, of course, is the fact that it has the Ayala Land pedigree. After Ayala Alabang, Benjie knows that Ayala Westgrove Heights is the Next Big Thing. And as they begin to grow their family roots here, they know that the future of a wonderful future are simply within reach.

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# Displace your bets

THEY say things must be looking up for business. How else to explain why the stock market is moving up?

It's not as if we're not in a fiscal crisis, hemander!

And up is now, this once administration of Gloria's has yet to get a single tax measure from Congress.

It's not as if surveys after surveys are no longer showing low levels of business confidence. And so, what's behind this stock market upsurge.

In reality, the Philippine stock market has fallen behind the others in the region.

They are saying that's all there is to the stock market's rising.

As stock market players see it, stocks are still so undervalued even after the past months of run-up, that any buying interest is bound to push up prices.

Still, nobody can deny that foreign funds, at last, are coming in to the local market.

There are those who are just testing the waters and other fund managers who are just making some bit or much bets on us.

That should tide us something about how foreign investors look at our prospects.

At least they are now willing to gamble on us.

This, to me, is better than before the stock market started rising.

ing ignored.

* * *

DESPITE the sharp increase in oil prices, which is beyond our control, and the inaction of this new administration on the reforms it promised to during the campaign, which is much more beyond our control, certain sectors in the stock market are doing well.

And so, somebody who looked like Jonathan Pacunal, a Filipino bellhop/jeepney painter who left for the United States four years ago to perform in Palm Springs, asked me if this stock market spiraled to the top.

Well, hon, nobody can know for sure.

Still, I must say that the telecommunications sector is doing well, each company posting record profits, except perhaps for Maynilad, which is still posting record interest costs.

And in the crisis-proof food business, San Miguel is on a shopping spree for now and old businessmen, here and abroad.

It may take time for the company so to realize the full potential of its acquisitions. This is perfect. Stock investors always think of the future.

Certain real estate companies are also making some sort of a comeback.

They all slowed down after the 1997 financial crisis.

Still, SM Prime, owner of the SM mall chain, is expanding like crazy, and Ayala Land and Megaworld never really let the financial crisis bother them.

Others are getting some old projects out of the shelves.

In the real estate sector, you see, everybody believes in this "seven-year cycle" of boom and bust.

The past seven years after the financial crisis, truly, were the pits for the property industry.

The seven-year cycle, they say in real estate nowadays, is over this year.

The stock market apparently got excited into that kind of thinking, too.

Plus, of course, the stock market has the vicente Supreme Court decision to cheer about, which should be a boon to the long dormant mining sector.

The Supreme Court admitted it made a big mistake in banning foreign investments in mining. Who will invest this?

Indeed, all the minerals in the land belong to Filipinos as our—what did the Supreme Court call it again now—"nation of patrimony."

Sure, they belong to all 75-billion-cheh, under the ground, undewa.

* * *

OHH time, I overheard talgat John Colmenares Jr., in a casual conversation with a senator, as he talked about his group's reform, the Sandoval called Digital.

In only a few weeks, the price of digital almost tripled.

You know what? Enna Imperial, who is said to have made stockloads of money in stocks, said he could not figure out why the Digital stock was going up that fast.

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6:00 am Assembly of Members, Participants, Representatives and Guest
Ruby Sulaymon Park (in front Manila Church)
7:00 am Wreath Laying Ceremony to the Student Monument of the late Mayor Antonio K. Luciano
Roxas Blvd., Manila
7:30 am Distribution of free copies of newspapers, magazines, comics by representative CMAP-member publications to the public at the famous Baywalk area
8:30 am Healthy Awareness Motorcade from Baywalk Area to Rizal Memorial Football stadium (see motorcade route)
10:00 am Opening of the Sports Events & Extravaganza
Rizal Memorial Football Stadium
Vito Cruz and Adriatico Streets, Malate, Manila
4:00 pm Awarding Ceremony and drawing of raffle prizes
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# Breaktime

By [illegible]

My take on that is, Cebuanos think that nobody is playing around with the truth. It's just that the truth is going along with the unusual thread.

But then I heard one when Gokongwei started to make a sales pitch on a subscription to Sun cellular phone (owned by Digitel) to the senator-trustees of trustees.

* * *

NOW Sen. Sergio Osmeña III thinks that Congress can only pass the tax laws this year, if ever at today.

But will the Senate, according to Osmeña, may even change the version of the House of Representatives. The Senate will try to bring up the tax laws.

Osmeña believes that the Senate cannot overrule it, because raising the taxes too much can only make all our opponents from the affected companies.

They are the US cigarette company Philip Morris, the business empire of Lucio Tan, and San Miguel.

If the Senate insists on too big an increase in the tax rates, according to Osmeña, these businesses will have to fight the measure around. Nothing will happen.

In short, there has to be a compromise. But then again, that's what taxation is all about. I mean, taxation is known to create revenue too. It is just a tax on tax!

And what was it again that our lawmakers need to say about taxation without representation?

* * *

BEYMEER an aide, a couple of executives from the giant Swiss watch company Swatch visited the country recently.

One of them was Stephen Richards, who is based in Singapore, head of the group's operations in the part of the world.

Richards was the guest of honor in a party held at the home of businessman Hugo Ramos, who holds the exclusive distributorship of Swatch here.

Apparently, the Swatch executives wanted to show a little gratitude to Ramos for what he did for the Swatch name brand in the country.

Look, under the Ramos distributorship, "Swatch" became as much an everyday word here as kuring pakwan.

* * *

IN THE 1980s, actually, Ramos had the foresight to get the exclusive distributorship of the new brand of cheap, chic watches called Swatch.

Today Swatch is a household name here, what with the celebrity endorsements of basketball star Alvin Patrimonio, as were our lone gold medalist sailor Ariel Lutsey, Hilton Cipriano.

Hilton belongs to the Cipriano side of The Cory Aquino family as the new POC president, the former congressman of Tarlac from "Noynoy" Cipriano.

Now, the new Swatch model Inspy Marcoses happens to be the son of Sen. Imee Marcos, the daughter of the late former President Ferdinand Marcos.

I think it is good enough that, at least to watching, there is no politics. Imee's son has Swatch endorsers from both sides of the long standing political Marcos and Aquino lines.

* * *

HOWEVER, Ramos has been asking around about the economic prospects. I think he knows a lot more than he let on.

As if I did not know that the gentleman from Switzerland was here in the Philippines to rule the destiny of the various watch brands under the Swatch Group.

The watch brands in his selling card, which are apparently the brands he is pushing for in the sale rate sale visit, included Rado, Omega, Longines, Calvin Klein, Tissot, Hamilton, Blancpain, Balmain, and of course Swatch.

For the sake of Lito and Bong, the Swatch Group of Switzerland has acquired several lines of watches.

It now also owns a company which makes watch parts and components and supplies almost every other Swiss watch brand.

Imagine, if only 10 percent of the 80 million Filipinos buy watches from the Swatch Group, that's already eight million pieces, and Ramos will be selling our time.

But know what? There are some eight million Filipinos working overseas. I think that's a huge market.

# Garments trade seen to grow 10% in '05

By Sarwar M. Claveria

THE YEAR performance of the garments industry in the first 11 months is seen to pave the way for an expected 10-percent growth in 2005—the first year when the global market opens without the quota system.

Garments and textile export earnings in the first 11 months posted a 7.8% growth rate over the same period last year at $2.3 billion.

According to the Garments and Textile Export Board, the industry performance as expected, although there were indications it could surpass the forecast 8% growth for 2004.

CTEB executive director Emelita Jacinto said that local garments makers and exporters have entered the transition phase from isolated operations to collaborative enterprises by remodeling their businesses.

He explained that the changes would consist of integrating independent operations, consolidating industrial sites, as well as sharing resources and materials between companies.

Government data showed that from 2001 and the first half of 2004, 360 new manufacturing facilities started operations while 269 factories shut down, resulting in a net gain of 111 new businesses.

In the same period, 44,000 workers were hired for new jobs while 41,139 were laid off—a net gain of 3,900 new jobs.

"This shows that, as the local industry is in transition, there will be closures and consolidation, but the result will always be a net gain," Jacinto said.

From January to November, exports to the United States amounted to $1.78 billion or 70% percent of total exports. This means a decline of 2.9 percent from $1.83 billion in the year-ago period.

On the other hand, exports to the European Union shot up by 19.2 percent to $387.7 million from $325.1 million. This accounted for 15.4 percent of all garment exports.

Top EU destinations in the first 11 months were United Kingdom, with shipments valued at $120 million; Germany, $66.2 million; the Benelux (Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg) countries, $66 million; France, $56 million; Spain, $36.3 million; and Italy, $19.6 million.

# New 'sin' tax . . .

# Stocks end at 1-month low

## DISCLOSURES


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# SM Prime sees 16% revenue growth

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

# DBP sets aside P50B for energy projects

By Abigail L. Ho

TO ENCOURAGE the development and use of renewable energy resources in the country, the Development Bank of the Philippines has earmarked P50 billion to fund renewable energy projects, particularly wind power projects.

Reynaldo David, DBP president, said the bank was willing to offer thinner spreads on loans to firms interested in developing clean power generation.

According to David, most wind power projects now are struggling to be viable.

He said such projects entailed huge investments while lenders would charge large interest rates on loans.

David cited as an example the DBP interest rate on such loans.

The current 9.75 percent that the bank charged included a 4 percent spread. Other interest rate components included the cost of fund (8.75 percent), guarantee fee (one percent) and foreign exchange (4 percent).

All components of the interest rate could not be touched, David said, except for the 4 percent spread that the bank charged.

But David said the DBP was willing to bring this spread down to only 3 percent to help make wind power projects more viable.

"The DBP is willing to take on a thinner spread, but there should be a realistic tariff structure to reflect the all-in cost," he said.

He added that for wind power projects to be viable, the bulk of the project cost should come from concessional development assistance (ODA) loans and grants instead of commercial loans that charged high interest rates.

The ideal mix, he said, was 70 percent ODA, 20 percent grant and 20 percent equity.

Multilateral lenders like the World Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, German development bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Asian Development Bank and Danish lending institution Danida should all be considered as possible funding sources for entities wanting to go into the renewable energy business.

The Department of Energy last Thursday signed pre-commercial contracts with three firms for the development of six potential wind sites identified in the country's Wind Power Investment Kit.

## Donors urged to stop funding coal plants

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE MILITANT environment group Greenpeace International has urged multilateral lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) to halt funding for coal-fired power plant projects throughout Asia.

In a recent meeting with the ADB, non-government organizations and leaders of communities where coal-power facilities are situated, Greenpeace asked the bank to be more cautious in approving loans for such projects, especially if there was strong opposition in the area where the facilities would be constructed.

"The ADB and other international funding institutions, along with governments, must shift investments from fossil fuel projects, like coal power plants, and make the widespread uptake of renewable energy projects to change the current trajectory of global climate change," said Jasper Inventor, Climate Campaigner of Greenpeace Southeast Asia.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has pointed out that developing countries in Southeast Asia are expected to suffer most from climate change in terms of loss of life and effects on the economy. Extreme weather events such as strong typhoons, flooding, landslides, and droughts will occur more frequently and with greater severity.

Greenpeace noted that despite local opposition, the 4GR had landslided the construction of the 1,200-MW coal-fired power plant in Pagbilao, Philippines, and the 800-MW plant in Hwange, Zimbabwe.

Earlier, Greenpeace urged local communities living near active or fossil fuel power plants, to reject plans to build the facilities in their areas.

In a conference forum held last week, community leaders from different parts of the Philippines and Thailand gathered in Manila to forge alliances and watch efforts of their respective countries in burning coal fired power plants.

According to the group, coal is the single largest source of global carbon dioxide emissions, the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming and climate change.

Under the Department of Energy's 2004-2013 Philippine Energy Plan, the country's coal demand is expected to increase by 6.3 percent.

## Aquaboard tapped for shrimp testing

THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources yesterday designated the Fisheries and Aquaculture Board (Aquaboard) as official observer to the upcoming testimony (Double-dipping) turning to be conducted at the government facility in Bataan, Pangasinan.

Monument is a brackish shrimp widely accepted in the world market. It was previously banned in the country for fear of contaminating local shrimp species.

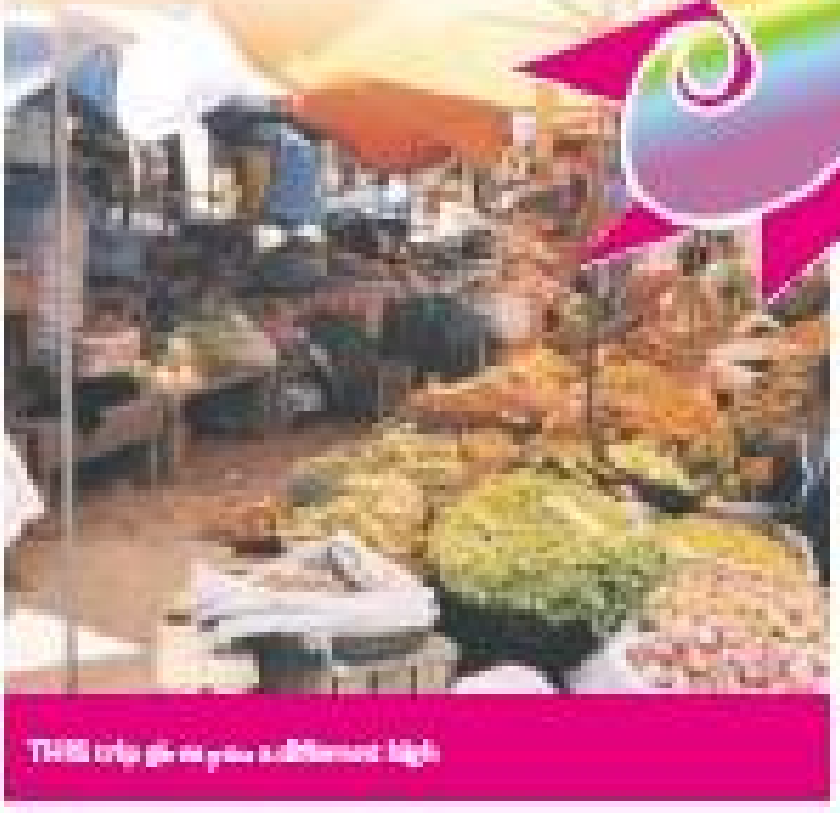
According to Lourdes B. Tanes, Aquaboard chief, they are confident that the testing will be concluded within 45 days without compromising the protocol in handling and culture of specific packages from feeds.

She said that tests, in two months from introduction of the imported broodstock, mature stocks will result in free spawning, which is time to determine if treatment is safe.

Once it has been determined that the shrimp is safe, "we envisioned 20,000 hectares of fishponds are required to adopt commercial operations," Aquaboard official said. "The industry to 20,000 jobs to growout farms alone."

Monument was responsible for the revival of the shrimp industry in China, making it the third largest exporter in the world, with 800,000 metric tons as against the Philippines' export of 8,000 metric tons.

Super



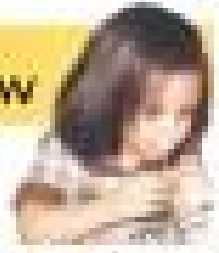
THIS trip ga-ve you a different high

# Divi Nation

## A psychedelic trip, a market of the surreal, a secret of success. Discovering Divisoria throughout the years

OUT THE WINDOW

Tala Diaz



Jennifer Lopez, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson, Britney Spears, Jennifer Capriati, Alicia Keys, Tyra Banks, Naomi Campbell, Kelly Rowland, Gwen Stefani, Lucy Liu, Shakira, Christina Aguilera, Destiny's Child, Missy Elliott, Aaliyah, Lauryn Hill, Alanis Morissette, Sarah McLachlan, Celine Dion, Madonna, Sade, Whitney Houston, Mary J. Blige, Tina Turner, Diana Ross, Gloria Estefan, Cher, Barbra Streisand, Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, Chaka Khan, Anita Baker, Tracy Chapman, Annie Lennox, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Stevie Nicks, Linda Ronstadt, Grace Jones, Pat Benatar, Debbie Harry, Joan Jett, Chrissie Hynde, Suzanne Vega, Kim Gordon, Kim Deal, Tanya Donelly, Courtney Love, Kathleen Hanna, Shirley Manson, Gwen Stefani, Alanis Morissette, Fiona Apple, Jewel, Sheryl Crow, Natalie Imbruglia, Meredith Brooks, Alanis Morissette, Sarah McLachlan, Celine Dion, Madonna, Sade, Whitney Houston, Mary J. Blige, Tina Turner, Diana Ross, Gloria Estefan, Cher, Barbra Streisand, Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, Chaka Khan, Anita Baker, Tracy Chapman, Annie Lennox, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Stevie Nicks, Linda Ronstadt, Grace Jones, Pat Benatar, Debbie Harry, Joan Jett, Chrissie Hynde, Suzanne Vega, Kim Gordon, Kim Deal, Tanya Donelly, Courtney Love, Kathleen Hanna, Shirley Manson, Gwen Stefani, Alanis Morissette, Fiona Apple, Jewel, Sheryl Crow, Natalie Imbruglia, Meredith Brooks, and see how they would fare on the ballroom-gown trip.

Through the looking glass and down the rabbit hole indeed, Divisoria is a necessary adventure. There is no place quite like it. The distinct scent that wafts through its streets and inner labyrinths reminds me of a mix of scrambled brains, rainwater and day-old cat food. It is a haphazard mosaic of fantasy overlapping

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# Divi Nation

From page C1

with concrete realities.

What else could it be, with butterfly wings, flower garlands, Carnaval costumes and venetian-style masks sold alongside ever-flowing frilly bodices, cheap Spongebob Squarepants panties and pirated DVDs?

Divisoria is a megalopolis of stuff, a neighborhood in Dalí's and Bettsi's world, a kaleidoscope of beads, sequins, metal bands, feathers, glitters and bitmaps, rows after rows of cloth in every shade imaginable.

Many times, it challenges logic. I once saw a bright red bandana with the familiar, shiny silhouette profile of Che Guevara, and under it, instead of the famous battlecry, "Hasta la victoria siempre," was printed the less publicized fiery words, "Rage Against the Machine." It is a moving scene peopled with characters in a theater of the absurd: skinny sweet-smiled men riding bicycles stacked with wire cages, fishball vendors steaming their faces at the height of the noonday sun, and children cursing in Tagalog on the open streets.

Divisoria is an experience, a feeling. Why, just the other day my friend got his sputum on the face with a rambutan. Truly, there is no place quite like it.

## Megalopolis of stuff

I had even once concluded that the site for cancer is somewhere in this megalopolis of stuff, one just needed to look hard for it. In the past years, I have come back to this market of the surreal time and again, always in search of some strange thing and always lucky enough to find it.

On Halloween, instead of going to a costume store, I would come to Divi with only my imagination and a few hundred pesos in my pocket, and find that my facsimiles of Snow Queens and Gaiman's Endless come to life. Every Christmas, needing craft accessories per necessary details as authentic-looking beetles and shining strips, all I needed was some time off to walk down its streets and collect them in bulk.

Yet, fairy tale fantasies and cancer cures aside, I have observed that this nexus of every known stuff has taken on an important role in the kindness of small kindness. It is Divisoria where the creative makeovers of Manila's thriving bazaar culture totally make a pit stop. With the similar thinking capacities of imagination + some pocket money, one would be able to piece together and embellish innovative ideas waiting to be born in the seller's market.

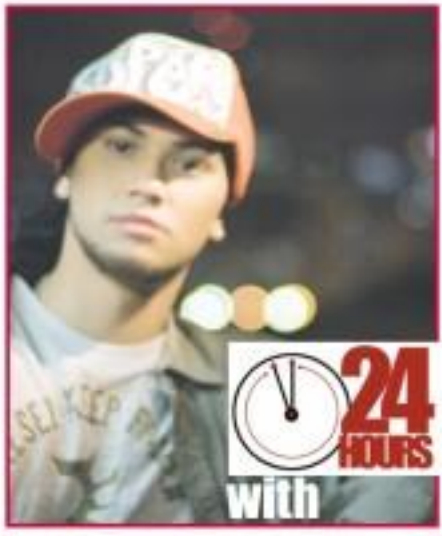
In my college years, my gal pals and I once started a Christmas sideline of packaging cookies to sell as corporate giveaways, in order to raise funds for a good cause—a much needed therapy trip. Not only did we spend eight glorious days in paradise, I was also able to buy a complete set of coffin diving gear.

Another good friend of mine, likewise a Divi Diva, made a killing with her kindness ideas during last year's bazaar season thanks to finding every buck, head and pink feather she needed. It is indeed a strange notion to grasp, the beauties of her ostentious journeys through the mazes of Divisoria, she was able to pay for forty months of traveling around Central America, from the mealtimes of the Mexican markets to the streets of Havana and exotic shores of Belize.

This season, immersed once again within bazaar love triangles, enterprising young minds are pencilling in trips, in between their holiday-upselling schedule, to Tabora Street in order to hunt for raw materials for their wares ranging from painted ballpens, beaded bags and bottled sweet preserves.

Is it any wonder I keep coming back to this place? It is the playground of inventors, innovators and creators. One day, if somebody listed the site for cancer, I wouldn't be surprised if he stumbled upon it somewhere in a dusty corner between Recto Ave. and R.

wned on me how many girls would warp
gh continents just to be where I was for a day




# Billy Crawford

Text and photos by Angelo V. Ignacio

BRIGHT lights, big city, natural promoter, outstanding performer. Singer, dancer, songwriter, actor, producer. The boy with the apple cheeks and bowl-cut 'do is now a man and, ooh la la, what a man he's grown up to be.

He may have dropped the "for," but every now and then, one could still see the frisky little boy who's added speak to the Boracay group and wowed Marahye Reyzer at five years old. While I listened to him sing softly in brown'ell in between shows, it dawned on me how many girls would wrap through continents just to be where I was for a day. With his down-to-earth demeanor and easy sense of humor, who wouldn't? Add to that the fact that he's neither has even a whiff of attitude nor rhesus temper tantrums, and you're all set. And, oh, did I mention he speaks fluent French?

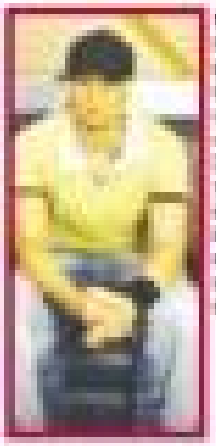
Jacks and the bubblegum pop image in favor of a sexy new look, a transition similar to that of his good friend Justin T. Right now, he's busy re-putting our motherland right back on the map with international awards and a brand spanking new album that's positively oozing with hot groove beats and pure, urban sensuality.

CEGUs raised their qualms: Is he still popular here after all these years? Do people still remember him? And the whole of Manila responded with a resounding "Hell, yeah!"—greeting him with camera phones, album covers and needs under that clearly read, "Welcome home, Billy Joe!" (Hard habit to break, I know.)

Next year, when he begins his UK album tour, his Pinoy fans will wait with bated breath for more news of his global triumphs. Hopefully, a longer visit in Manila will be in order as well. Until then, we'll be breeding more daggit for him to crunch on.

*He's brought home the bacon, now, let's toast to his success. While he's singing his songs, I'm singing praises. So will the rest of the free world.*

*E-mail the author at ceeds_no_make@yahoo.com*



**12:40 p.m.** Hosting last night's episode of MTV's newest reality show, Billy's more recharged and ready to pose for Chalk. Text this girl he's fantasizing making love to at his unknown abode, even when he's supposed to look serious.

**1:07 p.m.** It's Phil's turn for him to see Billy quickly changes his outfit. After a series of yoga shots, photographer Mags asks him to do one of his dance moves. He does stands along the "running man" with a goofy look on his face, which gets us laughing like crazy.

**1:47 p.m.** During the session after lunch, Billy and [illegible] flirt and talk about their favorite [illegible] and [illegible]. Don't look at him while he's [illegible].

# 24 Hours with Billy Crawford

From page F2

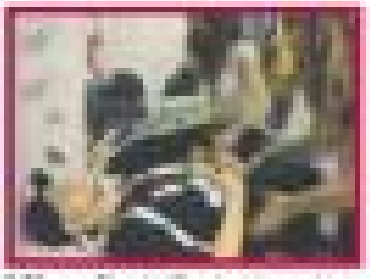
**3:04 p.m.** ... an absolutely flustered (I regret just realize hearing their album [unintelligible] signed.

**4:08 p.m.** Easy girls. It's not what it looks like! In the set of "Starstruck 4," Billy stalls with American idol finalist Camille Velasco while waiting for the shoot to start. Both 19, Ara, [illegible] met [illegible] at a young age. Talk about Pinoy power!

**4:54 p.m.** At the [illegible] station, Billy converses with DJ [illegible] to thank them. If there's one thing he loves most about himself, it's the fact that he's Pinoy, and a darn proud one at that.

**5:01 p.m.** Billy bumps into the "TV Patrol" crew on the way to the taping for "Pasado K" and shares some hearty impromptu greetings for the primetime viewers. By now he's totally pumped, but it doesn't show at all. What a trooper!

**5:08 p.m.** During his interview with "Pasado K," he keeps apologizing if he sounds too [illegible] and it's hard not to admire his humility. We learned that Billy was born a 4th-month baby, so the [illegible] for embracing [illegible] is the cast [illegible] more children. Thanks God.



**7:00 p.m.** Sleeping Beauty gets a wake-up call from Mimi, his hair manager. He takes a short nap in [illegible] while [illegible] with his iron well. But we laugh anyway.

**7:47 p.m.** After his "Wazzup! Wazzup!" greeting, we head back to the dressing room. "Pretend that we're observing around," the writer says. His answer: "Who's pretending?"

**8:20 p.m.** Extraction complete. He gets the "Morning Star" audience all hyped up and go loving while performing "Bright Lights" with Del Boca dancers. Mr. Pure Energy himself, the indomitable Gary V., would definitely be proud!

**11:03 p.m.** Mercifully, the day ends with a dinner party at the house of Miss Bella Sun, [illegible] records' head honcho. Kim expresses in her pictorial, where Billy still managed to come off looking totally hot despite his [illegible] did we say no, Super?

Super

style . urban living . pop culture . entertainment . recreation

# Natalie Merchant: Goddess of Geekdom

She continues to shape words into timeless poetry and tales that are mostly absent in present-day pop

Text and artwork by Oliver H. Pakunbaum

1989 live-action have had really a profound effect on me as Natalie Merchant has, and still does. She has penned many youthful stories which have for those people and everything at the same time.

This former "Tennessean" of the folk-inspired alternopop band 10,000 Maniacs has used a marvelous combination of idiomatic rhythm and visual storytelling that is likely has many science fiction fans hear that includes adolescent girls, aging new wave diehards, the adult contemporary market, and celebrated performers like The Cure's Robert Smith and R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe. Do and Merchant wrote also on lovers.

Many of Merchant's songs can be interpreted a zillion ways by different pairs of ears, but some of them are very specific and true. Whichever context their songs may be put into, her overhead in her dropped 10,000 Maniacs' eponymous tenure, their formal outcast album dressed basic Merchant's compassion towards victims of persecution, the employ, the clever use of words and perspectives that express other people's pains and thoughts and angst form in her distinctly warm and edgy vibe.

Joining the predominantly-old-is-cool male band as a voice in the early '80s seemed like a foolhardy option then. But she showed promise as an engaging performer, also a knack for improvising lyrics onstage, as well as

THE MERCHANT of vocals delivers songs with a message.

# Natalie Merchant . . .

Turn page 14

dusting up her otherworldly combo of sisterhood and urban storms. The singer would later pursue a career acting (the Manilas, citing that she didn't want to make "art by committee" anymore.

In the 10 years that she spent with them, she found made six albums, two of which enjoyed resounding commercial success. In some of them, she designed their lyrics above to look like very readable book chapters.

Merchant and the Manilas briefly "reunited" early this year for a new CD encompassing "Campfire Songs," which contains radio hits and previously unreleased material. This follows Merchant's fifth solo release, "The House Carpenter's Daughter," an independent album where she covers obscure folk anthems.

The multiple "Tower Teacher Award" winner still continues to church, paint, garden and make babies and songs during her days off. Now a new mom, writer has Merchantfans looking forward to hearing how the change makes her share all the stars personages and her singing.

A rundown of some of Natalie Merchant's subject matter and the corresponding songs:

**Motherly.** In the song "Ebony Tears," Merchant speaks as an adult parent who can't read. "I'm lost with 'big,' and 'wondering' why your hair is changing with every line you read."

**Pain.** "The Big Parade" is an emotional ballad for soldiers killed in Vietnam, while "Kind Person" describes a child dealing the immediate devastation caused by the alcoholic family.

**Self-esteem for adolescent girls.** The playful story "Kill Them All" contains the piercing line: "You'll never be like the women known in the magazines."

**Mourning a loved one's passing.** She takes the persona of an old man whose wife of 50 years died of a painful illness in "Beloved Wife." Another song, "Gone" is dedicated to Merchant's sister "Nicole," from Phoenix.

**Multiple personality disorder.** In "Katrina's Cup," some of Merchant's most vivid imagery is featured. One of nine different personalities has a tongue-tied lyric "Be careful not to spoil her/ Call a criminal attention prosecute/ make someone/ all others disagree!"

**Family.** Kind perceptive attention to "Human Wishes / Thought," while a daughter reaches out to a problematic parent in "Trouble Me." In "Carnival Alley," the perspective is that of a little girl's and her reception with her previous brother.

**Sex and violence in entertainment.** "Giddy Everybody Needs" is a caustic commercial about over-consumerism plays: "If blood and love were on every disc we play/ we what they want"

**Injustice.** We sings on a black man wrongfully accused in "Wonder Man." Among the lawmakers

denounced are Gaston Americans. "Jesus Judas" is an angry letter against human rights violations.

**Personal themes.** "Her Jack Kerouac" extols the legendary beat poet. "I lay flesh sleeping wondrous/ assuming with fires/ they all spoke through you." Her editorial ballad "Henry Gorges" memorializes to about an romantic artist who drew stories for children.

**Gratitude.** Lyrically "Kind and Generous" in Merchant's simplest song, but it's one of her favorites. "Thousands of people in her concerts sing along to her "thank you, thank you" parts.

**Poverty.** A mother tells the old reality of living poor in "Don't Speak." Truly a woman ballad and a topic that few people sing about.

**Female archetypes.** "Carlotta" cleverly gathers seven different women of the same name. This one also a clever like where Merchant reacted to the various characters. Clips of it shows an exciting scene of humor!

**Controversial parenting.** She sings about a wrong lady from the home front in "My Mother the Man," and an angry family man in "Peace on the Wall."

**Philosophies.** "Everyone a Puzzle Lover" delivers sharp wit on the addictions befuddling some such as smoking, belief systems and social status.

**Child abuse.** Reality had previous written physical abuse in "What's the Matter Baby?" a real article on the theme, verbal abuse, neglect? Life is there."

**Religion.** A dreary exploration into a woman's unconsciousness is captured in "Jubilee," while "Pretend Obedience" deals with the eternal conflict between science and religion.

**Same-gender attraction.** "Southern Solo Days" focuses on a right friendship between two girls. It can be seen as gay, as the first-person perspective reveals "How I learned to hide, I'm locked inside, you'd be surprised if slowly but you'll never you'll never know."

**Romantic relationships.** A weary with contemplation ending a marriage in "Jezebel," which many also be a metaphor for Merchant's "divorcing" 10,000 Maniacs. She's a woman scorned on "Seven Years." The forceful "Don't Talk" revolves around a lover's guilty control by conscience.

**Inner strength.** "Build a Levee" recalls a mother's efforts on complex complexities, while "Wondering" is a very personal declaration of independence. "You're talking to a deaf mute well," indeed.

**Collaborations.** "Wonder" can be interpreted as a song about discovering one's inside and is circulating. "Alive" illustrates a colorful picture of life and finding contentment. "These are days" is a melodic, upbeat send home, a reminding depiction of happiness.

# Icons and outcasts

By Tim Yap
Photos by Carlo Ma. Guerrero

ROCKERS

SOULFUL singing from Ryoco Kuroiwa Main Attaya

PROFILE POWER: Mr. A's MC's rocker conducting the dance game

STYLISTICS: The band looked no older than when they came to play





PINOY idol, pseudo idols... Numbers dogs like no band at the NU 107 Rock Awards.

"LIFE is a calamity, all chaos. Come to the cafeteria!"

SPIRIL TYNELAND SERENADE: Janet Kenchi of Basement

PRINCE and audience amidst the events

SKA SENSATION: Mike Ruano of Basement All Stars

"SO WHAT are you looking at? Let's rock!"

NEXED MUSIC: Rock icons Iwa and K-Man's Attaya

ROCK BABY ROCK. Eat your rock out!

REGGAE MASTER: Papa Dazzo of Typical Dogs rockers

SURPRISE, SURPRISE: UK rock band The Barbarians like Rock Awards





BEAT BOUNTIFUL: Bamboo's Iris Cruz



DILDO DELIGHT: Julia Barretto, Tim Yap, Alwyn Uytingco and Aldo Agnelli

# Finding Gutsy

By Tin Yap
Photos by Daisy Tsoon

TO SCUBA divers in Action, "Failure" will remain a second spot for its breath-taking marine life.

Actor "Gutsy" Tsoon has made it his life mission to capture this habitat-people underwater movie. This coming Sunday, Dec 14, he will release "Failure," his passion project in Malaysian form.

Something from the sea, we have who to find Gutsy and filled us more information. "Look at this stuff, isn't it cute? Shh,don't you freaking wake up[illegible]..."

The thing about Gutsy is that completely become when you are underwater.

The thing I love most about scuba is the freedom to view whatever I want, whenever I want," he says.

People might be surprised to know that Gutsy is a diving instructor.

The most important thing you must to remember is that life is short.

I write when I cannot sit. I've been told to read a book on psychology.

The secret to happiness is being underwater.

My best ever outfit consisted of a pair of jeans, T-shirt.

My biggest hangover night consisted of six drugs and rock & roll.

If I were invisible for a day, I would hang out in Britney Spear's changing room.

If money was no option I would buy a boat and dive the world.

The world would be a much better place if there were less people in it.

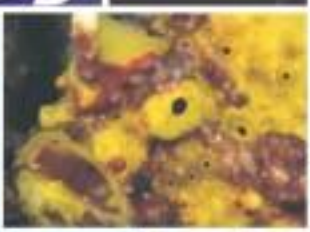
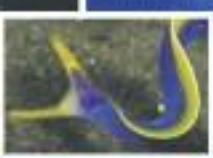
My hero is Jacques Cousteau.

My greatest hope for my future is utopia.

My most embarrassing moment was when I attacked a seal in the swimming pool thinking she was a mermaid.

My favourite way to spend a day is ASH, Sushi (Sushi).

My current state of mind is lethargic.

If someone would play me in the biopic it would be Robert Downey Jr.

My 3 favourite words are: Whatever, Fuck-it, Relax. Relax! I spend a lot of time